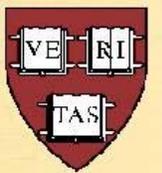




THE SOUTH ASIA INITIATIVE

AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY



2008-9 STUDENT GRANT REPORTS



SOUTH ASIA INITIATIVE STUDENT GRANT REPORTS

2008 TATA STUDY GRANTS: GRADUATE STUDY

Anthony Acciavatti: Hydraulic Pastoralism: Transects of the Ganga—Jamuna Doab

Initiated by the great famine of 1837-38, in 1840 the Ganga Canal was begun and largely completed by 1854. Originally intended to be 500 kilometers long stretching from Haridwar to Kanpur, the canal has been extended substantially throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century through bifurcations and extensions of its irrigating capacity. Nonetheless, at the time it was to be the longest canal ever attempted in history and was five times longer than the main irrigating lines of Lombardy, Italy and Egypt combined.

Today, traveling along the Ganga Canal, which now extends to Allahabad (Prayag) located at the tip of the Ganga-Jamuna doab, one is immediately struck by the scale and scope of irrigation. The space is inundated with tubewells; petrol and electric water pumps, and hand pumps, as well as a litany of advertisements painted on the facades of houses and shops alike.

Throughout my travels I meandered back and forth between the Jamuna and Ganga rivers, using the Ganga Canal as a spine or datum line within my documentation. I focused on four tracts of land that cut across the doab through the cities of Haridwar, Roorkee, Kanpur, Fatepur, and Allahabad. The sheer scale of the canal is undeniably impressive at Haridwar where it bifurcates with the Ganga. At Roorkee, the oldest engineering college in Asia, Roorkee College, was founded in 1847 for the express purpose of constructing the Ganga Canal. I had the pleasure of delivering a lecture to the department of architecture at the Indian Institute of Technology—Roorkee on my research concerning urbanism along the Ganga River corridor. The response was extremely positive and many students inquired as to the possibility of assisting me on the project as it continues onward.

The stretch between Haridwar and Roorkee contains many of the visually arresting novelties of the project: the canal crosses above rivers, at other points it passes under rivers, and the monumental sluices constructed at dramatic changes in elevation. However, the novelty of the project is the unimaginable expanse and distances that this gigantic infrastructure touches and the millions of people and livestock that depend on it in their daily lives. In this way, the canals act as a means to reformat the ground, to construct a super surface, a monumental super surface of intense hydrological control.

The spatial qualities of this super surface are what I focused on throughout my time in the doab. Due to the extent of hydrological infrastructure and the burgeoning population, cities are disappearing into the countryside; they are melting from their solid state. The distinction between city and countryside are wholly obsolete in this particular context, most notably along the expansive infrastructures of the Ganga Canal and metalled roads. The continuity of the canals and the built fabric of people coupled with agrarian practices and lifestyles reveal a spatial structure much like the kinds one finds in the state of New Jersey.

Unlike New Jersey, this region does have major urban areas with a particular density; however, these areas are spreading at great rates that the distinction between city and country, domestic and industrial, nature and real are quickly dissipating. The Ganga Jamuna doab embodies a philosophy of seeing and doing that attempts to suspend irreconcilable differences between mutually exclusive dispositions—the desire to artificially control the formless states of nature, i.e. water, while also attempting to

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formally graft a new, metabolic state of ground that is seasonally productive. The construction of the Ganga Canal, which is to say the construction and maintenance of a universal, super surface that provides adequate water to thousands of acres, represents one of the most significant attempts to conjoin technical acumen and environmental concern.

The monumentality of this highly engineered super surface promises, with fatal precision, in the name of progress, an alternative future that is unlike any other part of the world. The opportunity to traverse these spaces and represent them through drawing and photography will hopefully prove useful for various professionals and lay people alike to hallucinate on the possibilities that water use in a teeming population like that of north India will produce.

Anjali Adukia: Latrines for Learning: The Causal Impact of Toilets on Educational & Health Outcomes in Rural India

In part thanks to the South Asia Initiative-Tata Grant (thank you!), during the summer 2008, I spent time both doing further background fieldwork and laying the ground work for a larger randomized trial to examine the causal impact of latrines in schools on the educational and health outcomes of children and their communities. In this process, I met with funders, government and NGO officials, and community members. I also immersed myself in the world of sanitation in an attempt to deeply understand some of the issues underlying non-usage by actively participating in NGO activities in the field. Additionally, I began a pilot survey in Rajasthan with 100 kids across 10 schools. Finally, I obtained access to a longitudinal dataset that is not only helping to inform which locations would be best suited for the randomized trial but also allowing me to examine time trends on various other factors within schools and the impact of certain policies in the region.

Meetings with Organizations

Throughout the summer, I met with various people – funders, government and NGO officials, community members – whose work could either give me greater understanding about the space or help me further the larger project. Some examples include:

- Funders – One of the directors of the Aditya Birla Group in Mumbai is interested in running another pilot survey.
- Government – Officials in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mumbai, and Delhi each gave me information about policy changes that have happened over the years. People in the government of Rajasthan have verbally agreed to work together to implement a larger randomized trial, where they would absorb the costs for the construction of latrines and roll the trial out randomly. The details still need to be worked out for this.
- NGOs – The people at UNICEF have been extremely helpful and put me in touch with people in the government of Rajasthan. They are also very keen to see this kind of study done. It was with the Environmental Sanitation Institute and Manav Sadhna in Ahmedabad, Gujarat that I was able to go deeper in the field and gain a greater understanding about various toilet designs, the issues surrounding them, ways to approach communities, etc.

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It has certainly been a process to try and get things set up. There have been several people who clearly do not buy in to the idea that research is important (e.g. with attitudes of "we can fill out the survey forms without going in the field -- we already know what the answer will be"). Additionally, I am realizing that the research part (i.e. field surveys) is going to be much more expensive than I had initially anticipated (because I want to measure externalities in addition to the direct impact). If I do work with UNICEF as my partner, they would pay for the intervention costs, which would make a big difference.

Field Work

In order to gain a deeper understanding of existing interventions in the realm of sanitation and schools, I spent time in various villages both on my own and with NGOs. One of the activities included spending time on the Nandini Bus(1), a mobile sanitation bus that is a project of the Environmental Sanitation Institute (ESI) in Gujarat. This bus makes bi-monthly trips to various villages with the goal of leaving the village with sanitation-oriented behaviors by the end of the trip. It was interesting (and fun!) to talk with kids and families to see what makes them do what they do and to see the various methods NGOs use to try and get people to adopt good sanitation practices.

I originally thought ESI would perhaps be a great partner with which to conduct an experiment testing the impact of latrines on educational outcomes. My time with them demonstrated to me that while ESI is a great NGO that does meaningful work, it would not be so ideal to work with them because there would be less of a guarantee that we could maintain a randomized study (they work off the concepts of inspiration and love, and they do not believe that you can measure such things). Thus, from a research perspective, that partnership will unfortunately likely not work out in terms of actually implementing a project.

Additionally, I attended a few workshops at UNICEF's office in Delhi about sanitation (amazing to be in a room full of people who are all passionate about measuring slurry!)

Longitudinal Data Set

I also gained access to a longitudinal dataset as a result of my summer trip to India. There are many exogenous policy changes (e.g. Total Sanitation Campaign in 2003) that theoretically should have had an impact on certain student outcomes. In order to actually evaluate these policies, I needed to have a dataset that could give me information about the students before and after the policy change, both in the region that underwent the policy change and in a very similar region that is equivalent in expectation but that did not have the policy change. It turned out that the government of India has been collecting detailed school-level data since the beginning of this decade in a dataset referred to as DISE(2). I spent the beginning part of my trip working with the officials in India to obtain the raw data so that I could then analyze various policy changes that have happened over the years. This is very exciting to me!

1 "Nandini seeks to raise awareness of prominent sanitation and health issues, increase the felt need for water and sanitation facilities, provide basic health services, and afford an environment for volunteering within rural communities in India. With sleeping and bath facilities, the custom-built bus provides the flexibility to visit any region at any time. A state of the art multimedia installation, run on an internal battery system, also allows for media rich educational programs in even the remotest parts of Gujarat ... the project aims to motivate rural Gujarat to take control of their village and make it model of cleanliness, good health, and environmental sanitation."

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2 Based in Delhi, the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), a project of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, has developed the District Information System for Education (DISE), an annually compiled dataset that has information relating to students, teachers and infrastructure of schools registered with the Government of India. It includes variables such as number of teachers/students, gender, caste, and whether a school has electricity, toilets, or water, etc. They have been systematically collecting this information since 2001.

Sharon Barnhardt: Experimental Approaches to the Study of Public Housing Programs in Urban India

During the summer of 2009, a grant from the South Asia Initiative helped fund my dissertation research in India. I spent the summer, and the following semester, collecting data in a government housing colony in Hyderabad. In 2005, nearly 2000 households lost their huts when a fire spread through the Singareni slum on Hyderabad's south side. The state government responded by using a central government housing scheme to construct 1790 apartments on site. This colony is an interesting site for research due to the way the houses were allocated. The government held a public lottery to determine the individual unit a family would call home. Building the colony on the same location reduced the chances that a poor family would have to reject the house because it was far away from family and jobs – an often cited problem with traditional housing programs in India. The construction finished and families moved into their new homes in April 2007.

My research on peer effects of neighbors from a different ethnic group started in earnest during the summer I had funding from SAI. The outcomes in which I am interested are 1) attitudes about an ethnic group different from one's own and 2) the autonomy of women. I can compare these outcomes, for example, between the Hindu families who have no randomly allocated Muslim neighbors and the Hindu families who have 1, 2, or 3 randomly allocated Muslim neighbors. This is an interesting question because in theory greater contact with individuals from another ethnic group could change one's attitudes about the other's group in a positive or a negative direction. Greater conflict over resources within densely populated clusters of neighbors could encourage greater feelings of antipathy, but greater information that other people are just "like me" could also generate more positive feelings toward their whole group.

The first phase of the research uses a survey to measure explicit attitudes and female autonomy, and to collect detailed information on the social networks and communication patterns which may contribute to any influence a neighbor can have. The summer was mainly a time to build a team and write and test the survey, and we finished surveying approximately 1700 households in January 2009. Two follow-up experiments are underway as well. I have modified the Hindu-Muslim Implicit Association Test to make it suitable for an illiterate population. This computer-based test measures reaction times in a word sorting task both when required associations are a stereotype and when they counter a stereotype. For example, if a person were brought up in an environment where Muslims were generally considered to be "good" and Hindus were generally "bad", she may be able sort words faster into the categories of good, bad, Muslim, or Hindu when the "Muslim" and "good" categories are paired on the same side of the computer screen than when the "Hindu" and "good" categories are together. Modifying the test to work with an uneducated population was the biggest challenge to date for this phase of the research, and being able to debate the word and picture choices with a Telugu-speaking, culturally "grounded" local team was invaluable.

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Because I was able to stay in Hyderabad for awhile, I also spent time at the Indian School of Business, and worked on the second follow-up with an ISB Professor and a Visiting Research Scholar from Oxford. We designed a variant of the trust game, which we will launch in a few weeks to measure cross-caste trust in the same housing colony. At ISB I also assisted with an experiment on caste identification in urban India, using college students. Therefore, the time I spend in Hyderabad with SAI funding was very useful for my own research and for working with new colleagues in India.

I had studied in India before, in Jaipur and Varanasi, but this was my first time in Pune, and I am glad for the connections I made. I will definitely be going back for further study, and possibly research, in the near future.

Faisal Chaudhry: Case Law Jurisprudence in British India: Late 19th century and Early Calcutta Supreme Court

I am planning to spend the winter intersession period in 2008-2009 [now amended to summer 09] in Calcutta and London to conduct further research for the dissertation in modern South Asian history that I am currently working on. Concerning the juridification of legal normativity in the early modern and modern Indian subcontinent, one of the central concerns of my dissertation is to better understand the development of different 'styles' in colonial legal reasoning techniques in order to provide a more nuanced picture of this important topic than has heretofore been available. Towards this end there are two bodies of records that I would like to spend (more) time looking at. First, in London, I would like to examine more systematically the India-related appeals decisions made by the British Privy Council, which functioned as the highest court of appeal for India during the colonial era. Second, I am hoping to spend time in Calcutta to look at available records from the early Calcutta Supreme Court.

Johan Mathew: Steamships, Dhows and Routes on the Arabian Sea

I embarked upon a very successful visit to the National Archives of India in New Delhi this past winter. Unlike archives in many other parts of the world, December and January are excellent times to undertake research in India as even New Years day is not a public holiday and archives are open for regular hours. Thus I was able to effectively and efficiently use my two weeks in Delhi to gather research for my dissertation

I examined papers in the Commerce and Industry (Merchant Shipping division), Home, and Foreign and Political Departments. I found a number of interesting documents including: The agreement between the Sultan of Muscat and the D'Arcy Exploration Company (then part of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and later part of British Petroleum); information on the work of Col. Jayakar the Muscat Agency Civil Surgeon and his efforts to contain plague contagion coming from Bombay; correspondence regarding the potential use of dhows to ferry war materials from Bombay to Basra; and others.

Those two weeks have given me a strong familiarity with the people and the documents available at the National Archives of India, and I am now familiar with the organization of the archives and the bureaucratic procedures necessary for finding, requesting and photocopying documents. I will be able to return to complete my research in New Delhi well prepared for both its challenges and advantages. Thank you for your generosity and I can assure you that it was money well spent.

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John Mathew: To Fashion a Fauna for British India

It is with considerable pleasure and gratitude that I furnish this report on my research activities over the summer towards my PhD dissertation on the subject – ‘To Fashion a Fauna for British India’. Since my funding was obtained from the South Asia Initiative, the Asia Centre and the Department of the History of Science, all at Harvard University, I am providing a combined report. The funding from the Dept. of the History of Science enabled in the main research travel, board and lodging in Nepal and Pakistan, while that from the South Asia Initiative and the Asia Centre underwrote similar expenses in India. I am grateful to all granting bodies for meeting the cost of my flight between the United States and India.

My work fell into three categories: archival research, field research and seminars.

- a) Archival research: My research was conducted in the archives of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta (Kolkata), the National Library, Calcutta, the Tamil Nadu State Archives in Madras (Chennai), the Maharashtra State Archives in Bombay (Mumbai), the library of the Bombay Natural History Society in Bombay, the library of the Trivandrum Zoological Gardens, Trivandrum, the library of the British Ambassador, Kathmandu, Nepal and the library of the Zoological Survey Department, Karachi. I had the opportunity to spend time with original documents and published material not readily obtainable elsewhere. The research will go a long way towards furnishing material for the second and third chapters of my dissertation.
- b) Field research: Attendant upon my archival work were field trips to meet experts in various aspects of my research. In Calcutta, I benefited greatly from my conversations with Mr. P. T. Nair, the long-standing historian of the city and the editor of the published documents of the Asiatic Society through the 1810s, 1820s, the 1830s and the early 1840s. In Kathmandu, U.K. Ambassador Andrew Hall graciously gave me of his time and his resources in tracing the natural history work of the British Resident, Brian Houghton Hodgson between the 1820s and 1840s in Kathmandu, while Dr. Ramesh Dhungel, long-standing scholar of Hodgson at the Oriental and India Office Library in London, aided my ultimately abortive quest to find the last resting place of Hodgson’s domestic companion, Meherunissa Begum. I visited several of the oldest zoos in the subcontinent and obtained such literature as was available for Calcutta (1876), Lahore (1872), Karachi (1878), and Trivandrum (arguably 1859). Dr. Rafaqat Masroor and Dr. Muhammad Rafique were very forthcoming on work done at the Pakistan Museum of Natural History in Islamabad following introductions by Mr. Rab Nawaz of the Worldwide Fund for Nature and Natural Resources (WWF), Pakistan. Mr. Ali Dehlavi, also of WWF Pakistan kindly accompanied me to meet officials at the Zoological Survey Department and the Sind Wildlife Department in Karachi. Dr. Fehmida Firdous of the latter organisation afforded me an opportunity to see contemporary conservation in action through a visit to her 22-year long programme of sea-turtle conservation in Hawkesbay, Karachi, to see and participate in hatchling release and observe nesting. In Bombay, Mr. Divyabanusing Chawla was instrumental in shedding light upon colonial falconry and both the hunting and conservation of cheetahs and lions, on both of which he

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has written celebrated works. Dr. Asad Rehmani, Director of the Bombay Natural History Society, kindly led me through the intricacies of the library system in the organisation. I also benefited from conversations on aspects of colonial history with Dr. J. C. Daniel and Dr. Varad Giri (reptiles and amphibians) and Mr. Isaac Kehimkar (butterflies). At the Prince of Wales Museum (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya), also in Bombay, the curator Mr. Manoj Chaudhari, kindly brought me up to date with the status of natural history holdings, most collected in the colonial period. In Coonoor, I was fortunate to hold discussions with Dr. Tarun Chhabra, long-time advocate of Toda Rights and integral member of the Nilgiri Wildlife Association, the Nilgiris being at the heart of environmental debate during the promulgation of the India Forest Acts of 1865 and 1878, while Dr. Elcy George, Director of the Trivandrum Zoological Gardens, spared no pains in enabling close study of the documents pertaining to natural history in the library, assigning staff to aid me in my cause. To all of the above, my gratitude remains immense.

- c) Seminars: Through the good offices of Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan of Delhi University as point person, I was invited to speak on my research at Jadhavpur University in Calcutta by Dr. Ranjan Chakraborti and at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi by Dr. Rohan D'Souza. Likewise, Mr. Ali Dehlavi was responsible for connecting me with Dr. Shahana Urooj, Chair of Biological Sciences at Karachi University, who invited me to present on my research at her institution. In all cases, the talks were received positively and active engagement with the material ensued.

This has been the most intense summer research trip I have undertaken, lasting as it has for nearly three months, and it is only on account of the funding that I received that it was made possible. My work falls equally between history and biology and I express both my gratitude and my acclamation to all the granting bodies for encouraging the interdisciplinary work that I do. The following year will be the last that I undertake summer research for my Ph.D. and I shall hope to be able to return to some of my sites in South Asia to tie up some loose ends, keeping in mind that not all documents were obtainable in a timely manner owing to the cautious pace at which local administration may move. I would like to thank all granting bodies and remain particularly grateful to the awarders of the South Asia Initiative Study Grant, the beneficence of which enabled so much of my summer research.

Dinyar Patel: Summer Hindi-language training and research on Parsi involvement in the Indian nationalist movement.

I am a recipient of a Tata Study Grant for 2008-09, which I used toward funding my summer 2008 activities. I spent the overwhelming bulk of my summer in Jaipur, India where I participated in the American Institute of Indian Studies' (AIIS) intermediate Hindi language program. This was an intensive, ten-week long program designed to fulfill the equivalent of second-year level Hindi instruction.

We had anywhere from four to seven hours of language instruction a day. Our instructors, many who were products of the high-ranking Hindi language instruction program at the University of Rajasthan, divided this block of hours into several different classes and tutorials. Dr. Rakesh Ranjan, professor at Columbia University, provided

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core instruction in grammar. Other instructors taught small seminars on speaking skills, newspaper reading, Hindi literature, and Hindi film. These seminars were all kept deliberately small, with no more than four or five students. In addition, we had several personal tutorials where we could pursue topics of personal interest. I chose, for example, to do newspaper and literature reading focusing on contemporary political issues in India.

Our language instruction was supplemented by language practice in the Jaipur area. Along with some friends, for example, I would go to Jaipur's Old City quite often and do my best to rely on Hindi alone while speaking with locals and shopkeepers. The AIIS aims to place students in a native language environment; as such, we lived with Hindi-speaking families during the duration of our program. Being in a homestays provided an excellent opportunity for language practice. I grew extremely close to my home family and often joined them on excursions around the Jaipur area. Daily speaking practice in Hindi at our homestays visibly improved my Hindi speaking and understanding proficiency.

The AIIS language program lasted from mid-June through the end of August. I spent the remainder of my summer in Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta, undertaking research on the Parsis. My main research interest is the development modern Parsi Zoroastrian community and, specifically, the community's involvement in the Indian nationalist movement. In Bombay, I met with several important individuals within the Parsi community, discussing research ideas as well contemporary community issues. I also had the opportunity to interview a 94-year old Parsi woman, Dr. Aloo Dastur, formerly of the University of Mumbai, who was an associate of Mahatma Gandhi during the independence movement, involved in the propagation of khadi (coarse, homespun cloth advocated as a domestically-produced alternative to British mill-made cloth items). Dr. Dastur provided an extremely interesting personal look into Parsi involvement with Gandhi's movement.

Harpreet Singh: Intensive summer Sanskrit study in Pune

The South Asia Initiative at Harvard provided me with a summer research grant to pursue language work in India. The purpose of this report is to provide a brief description of the work that I was able to complete in the summer of 2008.

I enrolled in Sanskrit Language Program offered by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) in Pune. I arrived in Pune on June 20th and the AIIS helped me find housing eight kilometers from Deccan College, where the classes were to be held. It was an easy commute to the college by auto-rickshaws. After orientation I began my routine of Sanskrit classes from 9 am to 3 pm each day. The schedule was as follows:

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	9-10	10-11	15 min	11.15-12	12-1	1-2	2-3
Monday	Textual Reading	Personal Tutorial	Break	Grammar	Listening	Lunch	Journal Correction
Tuesday	Textual Reading	Personal Tutorial	Break	Grammar	Speaking	Lunch	Zero hour
Wednesday	Textual Reading	Personal Tutorial	Break	Grammar		Lunch	Zero hour
Thursday	Textual Reading	Personal Tutorial	Break	Translation	Guest Interview	Lunch	Teachers' Meet
Friday	Vocabulary	Textual Reading	Break	Weekly Achievement	Tape Review	Lunch	Local Trip & Student - Teacher Interaction on alternate week

We went on several field trips, which allowed us to read Sanskrit inscriptions from the premodern period. One of our trips was to the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, which a highly rewarding experience. During this trip we also visited Khuldabad, a major Sufi center where the Mughal king Aurangzeb is buried.

Overall, my stay in Pune was an excellent opportunity to read, write and speak Sanskrit and at the same time explore South Asian historical sites. I am grateful to the South Asia Initiative for its grant that made it all possible.

Anil Somani: Marwari Khata Bahi and Double Entry System

My trip to various places in India proved to be very informative and stimulating. I explored several places of India like Kolkata, Indore, Bhiwandi, Bikaner etc and found coexistence of traditional Khata bahi system and modern Double Entry system among Marwari traders in these cities.

Marwari Khata Bahi system records every transaction in the books at two places. This is exactly the scientific principle of the double entry system as well. This is remarkable that this important rule is simply assumed by all the Marwari traders without any question. In other words this idea is simply institutionalized in their accounting without ever realizing how this helps. Some (like SK Damani from Kolkata) argue that accounting transactions on two sides makes sure that the business is kept separate from the proprietor. It would be an interesting research question to find out if there is any historical exchange of ideas between the Khata Bahi system and Double entry system. Both systems are ancient as well as scientifically treats transactions by keeping owner separate from the business. My conjecture is that when India was getting invaded by the Europeans, one side spreads the accountancy principle to the other side.

In Double entry system, we call the two sides as Debit and Credit. In Marwari nomenclature these are naame and jamaa. The typical books kept for accounting are Rokad(Cash Book), Nakal(Journal), Talpat (Trail Balance and Final Accounts) etc. A typical way a Marwari starts to record his business transactions is to write all everyday cash entries on a small piece of rough paper. At the end of the day the cash box is reconciled with the entries on the rough paper all this is entered in the books and the piece is destroyed. Some traders do this less frequently, that is they do the entering at the end of the week. General trend is that the young businessmen do this every week, while

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old businessmen emphasize everyday reconciliation of cash box and sometimes everyday bookkeeping of cash transactions.

Any noncash entry first goes into Nakal. Then it is 'khatiyani'ed (ledgered) into separate accounts. Cash entry are recorded first in Rokad. To illustrate let me consider a cash receipt from a creditor. The way it is entered in the modern double entry system is to enter it as a debit entry in cash book and then as a credit entry on the creditor. Hence these will be entered on the opposite sides of the two accounts. In a Marwari Bahi Khata, this will be entered on the same sides of the books. It is done by having a cash book with flipped sides. So this entry will be entered on the right hand side of the cash book and right hand side (naame) of creditor. Probably this seems more convenient to a Marwari businessman. (Cash book is not supposed to have sides like naame and jamaa.)

One interesting thing that I noticed was the way entry for check received is treated differently across regions and traders. At some places it is not entered unless it is deposited in the bank. Hence a check is not treated equal to cash. Somewhere it is considered as cash the moment it is received and entered in the books that way. Double entry system also advocates for such practice. My observation is that the old follow the former rule (like Mr S K Damani and Mr Bajarang Lal Mohta), while the young (Arvind Khemka from Kolkata) follow the latter. One explanation is that the old have seen many instances of dishonored checks in their lives and that is why they are very wary of considering checks equivalent to cash. But whereas younger generations are more liberal and they treat a check as hard cash, because nowadays dishonored checks are punishable crime.

Modern training can also affect choice of accounting practice. Arvind Khemka is a businessman in Park Street, Kolkata. He is relatively a new businessman (4 years old). He had a rigorous training of modern accountancy system in his graduation (B.Com.). He did not get a well running business from his father. He established everything from scratch. He represents that young pool of Marwari businessmen who do not get "training" under the guidance of elders, but rather learn the tricks through real trials and errors of life. The only method that he is exposed to is the modern double entry system and he had no second thoughts in purchasing the accountancy software "Tally" once he established his business reasonably. Tally is a fairly detailed way of bookkeeping on the rules of double entry system. He advocates its use because he doesn't find it very different from the traditional system. To him, it is also useful to print the sale receipt directly from the computer instead of writing it by hand.

On the other hand, there are advocates of old system of accounting. Vinod Somani from Indore believes that for the limited purposes of accounting in a small scale firm, one doesn't need too much detailed bookkeeping. He has stuck to the old way.

Among finance business in Chennai Marwari system prevails. Charging differential interest rates has made it very difficult for them to use modern technology. S K Mutha from Chennai is a typical example of Finance businessman who sticks to old Marwari system.

Jagadish Daga from Bhiwandi (a place close to Mumbai) inherits business knowledge from his father. He is not in the old business of his father. He is not much trained in the modern commerce system, but was approached by a software builder. Software builder offered him that he would make a software keeping his exact needs in mind. This appealed to Mr Daga since the software is not a very demanding like "Tally" or "Fact"

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and he can use the technology to get a system that combines modern fast processing and the traditional way of bookkeeping. This has worked very well for him.

This investigation has given me some ideas about how to further my inquiry into the Marwari bookkeeping. I would wish to do a formal survey of a random sample of such Marwari traders across different regions (unlike in my case where I approached a set of known business associates in order to access some private information). Focus for this survey can be to get some quantitative data of the businessman characteristics (age, family size, experience, their social networks etc) and regress it with the accountancy systems followed by them. Also firm characteristics like firm size, tax payments, profits, age of the firm etc should also be obtained. The objectives of the survey have to be well

planned. It cannot be very intruding. It should have Several hypotheses of interest can be tested. Does traditional system helps in saving taxes? , does it affect profit level?, Do social status and networks decide the choice of accountancy method? Such questions are very relevant from the point of view of entrepreneurial research since such trends are going to stay on in south Asia and future of business in South asia will be affected by such trends.

Anand Vaidya: Scientific expertise and notions of the natural in the Bombay Natural History Society's conservation work

With support from a Harvard South Asia Initiative Tata Study Grant, I carried out archival research and interviews at Mumbai's Bombay Natural History Society during six weeks in the summer of 2008. This research will contribute to my dissertation prospectus and will be presented as a paper at the World Conference on Environmental History in August 2009. My project concerned the Society's recently-filed public interest litigation against the Indian Forest Rights Act of 2006. The Act attempts an unprecedented reorganization of property in India's national parks, establishing a mechanism for their roughly ten million residents to claim non-transferable rights to land and the use of non-timber forest produce. The Society's litigation, which will be heard in the Maharashtra High Court in March 2009, argues that the law violates India's constitution on two counts: that property law falls under the purview of states, rather than the central government; and that the Act violates forest dwellers' right to economic advancement by encouraging their continued residence in forests rather than cities.

My research uncovered the contestation that led to the filing of the Society's legal challenge, as well as the multiple logics the Society's board members used in arguing for and against the litigation across social spheres. In conversations with me, the two board members who proposed the litigation explained to me that their trouble with the law lay less in its violation of state prerogatives and more with its potential to undermine conservation efforts. These members have multiple affiliations with environmentalist organizations in India, but chose the Bombay Natural History Society as an agent for the litigation because of its profile and its association with political elites. They explained to me that they had made the case for such legislation to other board members by citing the Society's long history of involvement in Indian conservation policy and the necessity of protecting the national environmental heritage. Other dissenting board members told me that they actually supported the Forest Rights Act and would like to see the Bombay Natural History Society perform an oversight role, ensuring that its provisions are not abused to the detriment of park ecologies. These members claim to have been left out of

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crucial discussions and votes on the litigation, and have gone on to publish their support for the Act in the national press.

What became evident through my research was the complicated relationship between actors' motivations in pursuing a particular political end—in this case the overturning or upholding of the Forest Rights Act—and the logics used to explain or persuade action in a particular social sphere. With an anthropologist, board members explained their actions in terms of social justice; with other members of the Bombay Natural History Society board, they cited the Society's traditions as well as a nationalized conservation imperative; in their litigation, logics of governmental prerogatives and social advancement were deployed. These constitute 'voicings,' to use the terminology of Mikhail Bakhtin: speech acts that employ the conventions and assumptions of genres specific to their social situation. My further research will aim to study what lies beyond such voicings, to uncover the motivations that precede such discourse.

Jeremy Yellen: In the Service of Empire: Wartime Japanese Internationalism and the Greater East Asia Conference

This past summer I received support from the South Asia Initiative to research Japanese internationalist foreign policy during World War II. The support I received allowed me to travel to both Tokyo and Calcutta to analyze the Japan-sponsored Greater East Asia Conference of 1943. My research centered on three main questions. First, what was the Greater East Asia Conference? Second, to what ends did Japanese leaders hold the conference? And third, how did Japanese and foreign leaders interpret the meaning behind the conference?

I began my research trip in Tokyo, researching at the Foreign Ministry Office of Diplomatic Records, the National Diet Library, and the National Archives. The National Archives and Foreign Ministry Office of Diplomatic Records were both quite small—staffed by a small number of very helpful librarians. It was quite easy to access and use the resources at both of those archives. The National Diet Library, however, was a whole different story. The Diet Library is a giant book bank that jealously guards its vast collection. People are allowed to borrow only three books at a time. This meant I spent most of my time ordering books and waiting for them to arrive via the intricate library-wide conveyer belt system. Overall, my research did not dramatically change the way I view Japanese wartime policy. However, my Tokyo trip gave me a broader understanding of the existing materials on my topic, and has interested me in a number of thinkers and politicians of whom I was previously unaware. I also printed up a number of documents and articles that I will read as I hone my ideas in the coming months.

After a month in Tokyo, I flew to India for a week of research at the Netaji Research Bureau in Calcutta. While in Calcutta, I pursued research on Subhas Chandra Bose, an Indian leader who participated in the Greater East Asia Conference. I made use of the Netaji Research Bureau's vast collections of Bose's letters, speeches, papers, and background information to gain a better understating of Bose's personal and political views—including his opinions of the conference and of the emergent Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Of course, I did not spend all my time engaged in research. I am addicted to good food, so I spent as much time as possible sampling the local cuisine in both Tokyo and Calcutta. I was already familiar with excellent Japanese cuisine, and spending a month in

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Tokyo gave me an excellent opportunity to eat the dishes I know and love. My trip to India, however, gave me the first opportunity to experience real Indian cuisine, which I soon came to love. It was a revelation for me to learn that curry is not an ingredient, but a way of preparing food!

I am very appreciative of the South Asia Initiative's continued support. It has allowed me to continue the research I love—on a full and satisfied stomach!

2008 SAI STUDY GRANT: GRADUATE STUDY

Sana Aiyar: South Asian diaspora in colonial Kenya and post-colonial Britain

I received a South Asia Initiative Winter Travel Grant to South Africa. The purpose of this visit was to attend and present a paper at a conference in Johannesburg, and make a very preliminary research trip to Durban to explore a possible post-doctoral research projects on the South Asian diaspora in South Africa which would complement my dissertation work on the diaspora in East Africa. I presented the paper at a conference entitled "Print Cultures, Nationalisms and Publics of the Indian Ocean" held at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg between 15th-17th January 2009. My paper title and abstract are as follows:

"Anti-colonial Agitation across the Indian Ocean: Exploring the Boundaries of Race and Nation in Kenya between 1919-1923"

Abstract: The flow of goods and ideas across the Indian Ocean produced innovative constructions of religious and national identity amongst a diasporic South Asian community in Kenya that was never truly separate from its homeland in colonial India, yet, paradoxically, never wanted to return to it. This trajectory, however, was marginalized to the footnotes of area studies and nationalist histories whose narratives were unable to accommodate the diasporic space. The recent abandonment of such nationalist studies has created the space for entirely new paradigms of analysis within which scholars have unraveled alternative universalist notions of political and religious identity in the diasporic public sphere.

Drawing on this important intervention, I examine in this paper the nature of the transnational networks and connections that emerged out of the global spread of British colonial rule that cut across national and racial boundaries between 1919 and 1923. The British colonial state acted as a catalyst for the large-scale movement of colonial South Asian subjects as labourers, traders and clerks in the civil services across the British Empire creating, by the early twentieth century, a united political realm across the Indian Ocean between East Africa and the Indian subcontinent. The circular movement of these immigrants between Kenya and India, as well as material and imaginary links that were maintained with the homeland, created transnational connections between Indians separated by an ocean. A common colonial ruler and the universalist aspirations of anti-colonial movements of self determination made it possible for the diaspora to ally with Indian as well as Kenyan nationalists.

Three such nationalist movements broke out in India and Kenya between 1919 and 1923 – the anti-colonial *Khilafat* movement in India led by Gandhi; an anti-settler Indian

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agitation in Kenya led by the East African Indian National Congress, and an anti-government protest led by a mission-educated Kikuyu-Harry Thuku-in Nairobi that spread to the African reserves. Gandhi's political genius in combining extra-territorial Islamic universalism with love for the territorial motherland during the *Khilafat* movement brought the plight of Indians in East Africa within the legitimate orbit of anti-colonial agitation in the subcontinent. This in turn led the colonial Government of India, who feared that the agitation in Kenya would further alienate political leaders in India, to support the East Africa Indian National Congress against the European settlers. Meanwhile the Africans led by Thuku, having seen the storm of controversy that Indians had created, came out into the public political sphere and experimented with an inter-racial alliance with the Indians in the first organized anti-colonial African agitation in Kenya.

The experience of being a colonized people in the settler-oriented colonial structure facilitated the formation of a tenuous relationship between Africans and Indians that was defined by competition, alliance, and expediency. The universalist aspirations of anti-colonial nationalism thus enabled Indians and Africans in Kenya to explore innovative ways of negotiating the boundaries of race and nation. In this paper I explore the various contours of these three anti-colonial movements and argue that the material, intellectual and tactical connections between them made it possible for Indians and Africans to transcend the boundaries of race and nation without effacing them.

Garga Chatterjee: Faith, identity and co-existence in Chitpur Road, Kolkata - amodern multiculturalisms

The generous grant from SAI enabled me to study in the context of a post-colonial megalopolis, namely Kolkata, the fabric of living together with the "other" in a part of the city, with the codes of co-existence being different from the modern idea of peaceful co-existence of citizenry in a secular nation state. In my explorations, through extensive photography and interviews, I try to demonstrate instances of how long term living and trading together within the ambit of such amodern codes lead to working of systems of co-existences which are organic with ideas of faith and identity getting unbounded from the community of origin and the ethos brushing "off" on the other, in implicit ways and sometimes in not so implicit, even photographable, ways.

A part of this work of interviews and multimedia documentation has been made into a photo essay which has been presented at the following places with acknowledgement of SAI for its funding at the presentations:

1. organized by the Ctr for Communication and Development Studies in Kolkata, India
2. organized by the University of Liege, Belgium
3. organized by the Lowell House, Cambridge, MA, USA

Upcoming presentations at:

Mather House, Harvard University and the Harvard Divinity School.

In the collective mind of the city, the parallel non-Bengali cultures always had a certain niche. But centres of parallel cultures that held cultural prominence during the time of the British Raj have slowly been moved to the fringe of popular consciousness in Calcutta. In this way, over the past few decades their impact on the city's mainstream culture has been significantly diminished. However, this new consciousness seems to somehow have lost sight of the older centres of non-Bengali parallel cultures that held great prominence

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at the time of the Raj, such that the most prominent such centre, Chitpur Road, has become a fringe slice of exotica with very little influence on Calcutta's cultural composition. Instead, the newly conjured multiculturalism is more of an extension of the projected idea of a modern, urban, pan-Indian 'culture'. Fortunately, buried amidst this new gloss there remains a sublet tapestry in certain parts of Calcutta: its own organic fibre of a-modern multi-ethnicity – muted, non-jazzy, real. What was named Lower Chitpur Road after the British birth or rebirth of Calcutta historically predates the city. Chitpur Road remains crowded throughout the day, mostly with trams, buses, cars and carts jostling for space, and with people who see it as a connector between more 'modern' sections of the city, but also with those who still define their lives around the aura of quaintness Chitpur Road has developed with evolving times -- traders selling hookahs of silver, glass and jute, street-vendors advertising food that finds no mention in the city's mainstream restaurants, and perfumes or attars that the average Calcuttan of any faith traditionally associates with Lucknow. Lower Chitpur Road can be divided into two parts, the Muslim Bihari-Lakhnawi section and the Hindu Marwari-Bihari section. The confluence of these two is, perhaps aptly, at Mahatma Gandhi Road. In this area, the inhabitants live according to thoroughly a-modern cultural proclivities, the ramifications of which can be seen in the patterns of trade, faith, food and perfume. The close coexistence of the religious and cultural symbols of both communities, popularly considered more ethnocentric than the so-called 'liberal' middle-class Hindu Bengali, would perhaps be a strange conundrum for the modern secularist. Especially so in Calcutta, which construes such concepts as "secular" and "communal harmony" as the primacy of a civil identity of the individual over a religious or ethnic one; indeed it is a matter of pride amongst certain sections of the city's inhabitants that communal politics has found little place in it over the decades. Chitpur Road, however, stands in sharp contrast to this interpretation of secularism, portraying instead a system where purportedly incompatible religiocentric lifestyles occupy living spaces in close proximity to each other, and manage, it would appear, rather better than planned attempts at cohabitation. Here, it actually is the living faiths in living spaces that constitute a force that allow for the 'edges' of purportedly dissimilar communities to live side by side.

The advertisements on Chitpur -- not the large billboards owned or rented by well known advertising agencies, but the hand-painted tin boards and shop sign-boards -- are yet another reminder of its uniqueness. Billboards are written in English and Urdu, gradually changing to Hindi and sparingly, Bangla, as we moved from the visibly Muslim area to the Hindu one, obviously marking the demographic change along the way. Hand-painted bills advertise special prices on couriers small Uttar Pradesh towns as Faizabad and Moradabad – names that rarely, if ever, merit mention in the average Calcuttan's travel itinerary. Signboards over street shops promise delicacies, the likes of which are rarely encountered in other Calcutta eateries, even in traditional Mughlai restaurants.

And, of course, there are the wares: chamors (made of the tail-hairs of chamri gai or yaks and used in Muslim, Hindu and Sikh religious ceremonies), attars, tobacco-cutters, every kind of Indian musical instruments, strange desserts. These are all relics of older, barely electrical days of a more antiquated style of living and of business; one of trading through the day before the nine-to-five schedule gained widespread popularity. To the Calcuttan inhabiting the space we shall broadly call the modern, mainstream life, these

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almost uniformly empty shops and genteel, indulgent shopkeepers might well be a live show in an anthropological museum.

In Chitpur's Muslim section, there are references to a mythic Mughal connection. The Muslim lower-middle-class of this area, of course, never had much in common, even historically or culturally, with the great rulers of Hindustan and their ways of living and eating. But when a hole-in-the-hall eatery displays an advertisement board reading "Ahd-e-Mughaliya ka yaad taza kaarein" (Refresh the memory of Mughal times), the lingering appeal of claiming connection with what was arguably the greatest period of Muslim cultural richness is clear. After crossing Mahatma Gandhi Road, the change of the outward character of shops from the Muslim section to the Hindu one is a drastic one, not only in shop names but in wares, too. Moradabadi stores give way to Bikaner Bhujiawalas. Suddenly there are no more lungi shops or itr khanas (perfumeries). Khaini sellers replace hookah shops. Street vendors selling paan, durba grass, mango leaf and other signifiers of Hindu rituals are suddenly conspicuous, as are swastikas as the omnipresent emblem of faith, whether of one kind or another. There is even a nuanced change in the character of street foods – vendors of dates, kulfis and sheek kebabs give way to phuchka and masala muri.

I document in the photoessay, evidences of faith-cross overs and fuzzy identity boundaries.

Antara Datta: War, Violence and Displacement during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971

My research examines the creation of borders and nation states in South Asia using the 1971 Bangladesh war as a trope to do so. I look at how states include and exclude, create physical borders and how 'emotional' or mental borders are created between communities and people. In order to do so, I focus on displacement, violence and the movement of people, studying in particular the 'genocide' that takes place in East Pakistan, the movement of the 10 million refugees to India and the tripartite international repatriation effort of 1973.

The South Asia Initiative Grant enabled me to carry out archival research for my thesis. I spent nearly a month at the National Archives of India in New Delhi where I examined records on refugees from 1947-1965. This enabled me to clarify how the Government of India sought to semantically define and categorise refugees. I carried out further research at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library where I had access to a vast array of primary and secondary sources along with private papers.

The second part of my research took me back to the National Library in Kolkata. I had already spent two months here previously but I spent the summer carefully going through Parliamentary records in the Annexe of the National Library for the entire year of 1971. I looked at both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha records for this period as well as West Bengal State Assembly debates. Finally, I was able to study a number of journals and periodicals that emerged during this period which enabled me to get a better picture of the political ambience in West Bengal in this period. I was able to look at a number of small Naxalite journals as well as more mainstream journals that tackled questions about the social and economic effect of caring for nearly 4 million refugees in Calcutta alone.

The final leg of my research took place in London in the United Kingdom where I spent three weeks at the Kew National Archives. I was able to contact the archives beforehand

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and order files in bulk which meant that I was able to look at nearly 200 files pertaining to the 1971 crisis during this period. This was an invaluable archive as it was here that it became clear to me that the repatriation of Bengalis from Pakistan, of Biharis from Bangladesh and POWs from India, constituted an entirely new dimension to the aftermath of the 1971 crisis. I will be using the material from this archival visit for an entire chapter of my thesis.

I was also able to travel to Manchester briefly to present my work in July, 2008 at the 20th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies where I presented some of my preliminary findings. I have already completed four chapters of my thesis and I will finish my dissertation by December 2009. I am grateful for the funding from the South Asia Initiative, that has over the years, been critical to my completing my research on schedule and being able to access archives I would not have been able to otherwise.

Ujala Dhaka: Research on how Hindu and Muslim Identities are Negotiated in Spaces of Multi-Religious Engagement in the City of Mumbai

In the summer of 2008 I looked at various efforts that have been underway in the city of Mumbai to constitute religious pluralism as an object of civic governance, especially since the riots of 92-93. In the years following the riots, religious divides came to be increasingly perceived by the middle-classes as a civic problem, for which citizens as members of the state have the right and responsibility to seek solutions. One of the outcomes of this initiative to constitute religious coexistence as an object of civic action was the formation of mohalla (neighborhood) committees in different parts of Mumbai. I met with mohalla committee members from several neighborhoods in Mumbai, namely Mahim, Khar, Bandra, Nagpada, Madanpura and Dongri. While there was considerable ideological consistency between members from different areas of Mumbai regarding the purpose and the function of such committees, there were marked differences in the size, extent of activity and the frequency with which mohalla committee members met in their respective areas. It is interesting to note that mohalla committees were largely constituted in the so-called 'problem areas' of the city, and these were largely areas which were either Muslim dominated or had significant pockets of Muslims. In unspoken ways this labels Muslim residents as the cause of communal strife, even though the majority of the victims during the '92-3 riots were in fact Muslims. Muslims in Mumbai have become increasingly marginalized from the city's political, economic and social life since the mid nineteen eighties, largely owing to the xenophobic, anti-Muslim rhetoric of nativist political parties like the Shiv Sena. This is exacerbated by the blanket labeling of the city's Muslims in popular discourse as anti-nationalist in the aftermath of any terrorist acts, leaving the city's Muslims feeling even more alienated and isolated. One of the main questions that my research focused on was how Muslims in contemporary Mumbai deal with their position as a marginalized religious minority - how they relate to religious minority status and how that affects the ways they perceive themselves and their relation to other religious groups and to the state.

Participation of many of the Muslim members in mohalla committees can be understood as an assertion of their claim to equal citizenship i.e. as a mode of gaining recognition as equal actors in the city's affairs with a rightful stake and responsibility in shaping public religiosity as well as the conduct of the police and other administrative bodies in their areas. This also relates to broader questions about how Mumbai Muslims

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engage with the discourse of rights. I met with members of some city-based Muslim bodies that have taken up the cause of mitigating the marginalization of Muslims in Mumbai. A number of these groups are engaged in efforts to pressurize the government to implement the recommendations of the Sachar Committee Report, which was released in November 2006. The Sachar Committee was instituted by the UPA government to develop a detailed report on the social, educational and economic status of the Muslim community in India. The statistics put forth by the report indicate that Muslims are the only minority with human development indicators below the national average, highlighting the educational and economic deprivation of Muslims. Taking this report as a rallying point, many Muslim groups as well as political parties that claim to be sympathetic to Muslims such as Congress and Samajwadi Party, have been mobilizing support for the allocation of governmental grants to aid higher education of Muslim students and for establishing employment exchanges for them.

A significant proportion of Muslims in Mumbai traditionally belong to occupational groups that fall under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, which was instituted as one of the categories eligible for reservations in government employment. Muslims, however, haven't been able to sufficiently benefit from this provision because of issues pertaining to documentary proof that establishes their OBC status. Although Islam proclaims an egalitarian stance, social hierarchies based on traditional occupations of different groups are quite evident. Some such groups that I focused on included ansaris (weavers), idrisis (tailors), ghanchis (oilseed-pressers) and qureshis (butchers). Basing their demands on the fact that Hindus practicing the same professions as them have long received benefits under the Other Backward Class (OBC) quota instituted by the government, the aforementioned Muslim groups have successfully argued for their own inclusion in the OBC list of Maharashtra in the last four decades. However, they have found the gap between such declarations by the government and the actual recognition of applicants as rightful members of the OBC category to be rather wide. Most of my informants argue that such demands for the proper recognition of certain sections of Muslims as OBCs is not to be understood as a claim for religious minority rights, on the contrary it is a demand for recognition of the rights of groups that have been historically disadvantaged owing to their membership in certain traditional professions, which cut across religious communities. I found that it was important in this context to understand Muslim identity politics, on the one hand, as an effort to break out of particularistic identities by seeking better educational and work opportunities (a demand that they align with other disadvantaged classes), and on the other as a strong claim to defend their religious sovereignty (a right that they believe that all religious groups in India hold equally).

Supriya Gandhi: Mughal Writings on Indic Religions: Dara Shukuh and his Milieu

With the help of a grant from the Harvard South Asia Initiative, I spent the month of September, 2008 examining Persian manuscripts and paintings in various libraries and museums in London. The results of my research provided me with a new framework for evaluating the archive of Mughal cultural productions relevant to my dissertation. My dissertation explores the writings and broader socio-religious context of a Muslim prince of the Mughal dynasty, Dara Shikoh (1615-59), who authored and commissioned several Persian translations of Indic sacred texts and studies of Indic religious thought. Prominent

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among Dara's writings are two works indicative of his larger project: the *Sirr-i Akbar* ('The Greatest Secret'), a translation into Persian of the Indic sacred compendium known as the Upanisads, which he believed was the key to the mysteries of the Qur'an; and the *Majma' al-Bahrayn* ('The Meeting place of the Two Oceans'), a comparative study of Indic metaphysical concepts and Islamic mystical thought.

Modern scholarship on Dara Shikoh has attributed to his patronage the production of a large number of Persian interpretive renditions of Indic religious texts. These Persian works, largely unpublished, approach their Indic sources as a font of esoteric, mystical knowledge running through both Hindu and Islamic traditions. Dara is thus portrayed, in this view, as a liberal, ecumenical figure. This portrayal is set in explicit contrast with his younger brother Aurangzeb, who, in a struggle for succession to the throne, accused Dara of heresy and had him executed. My work on Persian manuscripts in London as an SAI grantee enabled me to uncover new information that complicates this depiction of Dara and Aurangzeb and also challenges prevailing notions of inter-religious relations in pre-colonial South Asia.

During my time at the British Library, I was able to date several Persian works on Indic religions that were previously attributed to Dara's patronage, to the later period of his brother Aurangzeb's reign. Examples of these works include *Nazuk Khayalat*, attributed to the *munshī* of Shah Jahan and Dara, *Chandarbhan Brahman, Rajawali*, a work on the Hindu and Muslim rulers of Delhi, attributed to Banwalidasa, who was in Shah Jahan and Dara Shikoh's service, and the Sufi-Vedantic poem *Masnavi-ya Wali Ram*, also attributed to Banwalidasa, whose *takhallus* or poetic nom de plume was 'Wali.' Through examining these texts, I concluded that *Nazuk Khayalat* was composed in 1710 AD by Chatarman Kayasth, also the author of a work on Hindu and Muslim kings, the *Chahar Gulshan*, whereas both *Rajawali* and the *Masnavi-ya Wali Ram* were composed by a Wali Ram of the eighteenth century.

This new dating and attribution gives rise to a seeming paradox: The reign of Aurangzeb, an emperor known for his commitment to Islamic orthopraxy, saw an explosion of Persian writings on Indic religions, by Hindus and Muslims alike. Meanwhile, his brother Dara, a Qadiri Sufi who evinced a keen interest in Indic religions, and engaged with a wide array of religious figures from Jewish, Christian and Hindu backgrounds, was not directly responsible for the larger literary movement with which he has been credited. The question arises, are these later productions responses to Dara's own project of engaging with Indic religions? While Dara's indological writings may well have influenced later writers, and while manuscripts of his writings circulated well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is worthy of note that several Persian writings on Hindu themes shower lavish praise on Aurangzeb, while sometimes also criticizing Dara. The process of establishing a chronology for these Persian indological writings has illuminated for me the shifts in their style, themes, and concerns between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My work at the British Library thus helped outline the problems that I will address in the dissertation.

In addition, I examined manuscripts pertinent to Dara Shikoh's affiliation with the Qadiri Sufi order. These include the *Kulliyat* of Mulla Shah, a compendium of prose and poetry by Dara Shikoh's spiritual preceptor in Kashmir. This manuscript is lavishly illuminated, suggesting a royal patron, and contains several marginal notes written by Mulla Shah himself. The *Nuskhaha-ya Ahwal-i Shahi*, an unofficial history of the

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Qadiris, by Tawakkul Beg, a contemporary of Dara, whose accounts of the prince and his preceptor sometimes contradict Dara's own writings, and provide details on controversial matters that Dara does not address. Such works enabled me to get a richer perspective on the complex relationship between the Mughal state and religious institutions in the seventeenth century. To complement my study of texts, I also examined Mughal paintings representing the theme of Sufis or Indic religious figures encountering a prince or king, in the collections of the SOAS, the British Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Assisted by an SAI grant, I was thus able to lay the groundwork for my project of exploring the complex religious dynamics of seventeenth and eighteenth century North India.

Bilal Ahsan Malik: 'Tradition', 'Modernity' & Islamic Education: The Case of a 'Modern Madrasa' in Pakistan

Thanks to South Asia Initiative's Tata Graduate Study Grant, I was able to conduct preliminary pre-dissertation fieldwork and archival research in Pakistan related to my long-term doctoral research interest in Pakistani madrasas.

For my doctoral dissertation, I plan to do an historically informed ethnography of a contemporary Pakistani madrasa†, for which I hope to do on-site participant-observation and fieldwork for 12 months next year (August 2009 - July 2010). Since its inception as a primary school by a local Sufi master‡ in the 1930s, and especially after its upgradation to a full-fledged residential college in the 1950s, the madrasa's founders and administrators have explicitly striven to create 'modern Islamic scholars'. Because of its educational goals, the madrasa lies at the heart of one key debate in post-colonial Muslim countries like Pakistan: the meanings attributed to 'tradition' and 'modern', and the desirable form and place of 'tradition' (especially 'traditional understandings of religion') in the 'modern' world. In light of this madrasa's unique position within these debates, in my research, I ask: What is meant by 'modern' and 'traditional' by affiliates of this madrasa? And how are these conceptions of 'modern' and 'traditional' – along with beliefs about their commensurability or incommensurability – maintained at the madrasa, internalized by individuals, and what are the effects of these processes?

Thanks to SAI funding, I was able to undertake preliminary pre-dissertation fieldwork in Pakistan (Dec 3 2008 – Jan 13 2009), focused on one strand in this larger research project: I was able to collect historical and contemporary writings by the Sufi master who founded the primary-school madrasa in the 1930s; his son (who upgraded it to a full-fledged residential seminary), and grandson (who is the current head of the madrasa). A particularly exciting find was the discovery of a notebook dating from the early twentieth century, recording the speeches and discourses of the original founder of the institution in the 1930s. To my knowledge, this is a single remaining handwritten notebook. Through a close reading and analysis of this and other texts gathered on this field trip, I will be able to explore: what are the continuities and shifts in the views of these different figures concerning 'traditional' Islamic education and 'modern' schooling over the twentieth century?

Another major research goal that SAI funding enabled me to achieve was to lay the groundwork for my year-long ethnography starting in the summer of 2009. I was able to explain my research to madrasa administrators, get their permission, and finalize logistics. All this will be critical for undertaking my historically informed ethnographic

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fieldwork, in which I hope to continue exploring the various ways in which the categories of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ have been imagined, constructed, and deployed in colonial and post-colonial Pakistan.

† *Madrasas* comprise of a range of religious institutional forms, providing a primary, secondary, and tertiary level religious education. The *madrasa* that is the focus of my study provides 9 years of post-secondary residential religious education, and therefore best understood as a ‘theological college’.

‡ ‘Sufism’ is a particular orientation within Islamic religiosity in which perfect exemplars of Islamic piety (Sufi masters, both living and deceased) are considered key mediators of God’s guidance and blessings for other people.

Daniel Sheffield: Sacred Narratives of Zarathustra in Medieval and Early Modern Zoroastrianism

For my 2008 South Asia Initiative Study Grant, I spent five weeks of my summer investigating Zoroastrian manuscripts and printed books in major European research libraries. My trip was extremely profitable, and I was able to edit and translate many unpublished and unstudied texts for my dissertation on the role of narratives about the life of Zarathustra in medieval and early modern Zoroastrianism. From June 3rd until June 22nd, I was based in London, where I worked primarily at the British Library. Having previously made the acquaintance of Ursula Sims-Williams, the Persian curator of the India Office Library, greatly facilitated my research in the library. The British Library possesses one of the largest and best-preserved collection of 19th century printed Parsi Gujarati material in the world, so Dr. Sims-Williams arranged for me to assist in the cataloging of many of these books. This bibliographic reconnaissance resulted in a variety of discoveries. Some of the texts I worked on included transcriptions of popular 19th century songs about Zarathustra and the Parsi religion, responses to the missionary activity of the Reverend John Wilson, educational texts intended for school-children, and mystical tracts providing detailed exegeses on the meaning of the events of the life of the prophet. I was also able to edit several unpublished Zoroastrian Persian manuscripts from both the British Library and the Bodleian Library, including unpublished Zarathustra narratives and ritual texts. One particularly interesting text detailed a philosophical dialogue which purportedly took place between Greek philosophers and Zoroastrian priests during the reign of the Sasanian monarch Shāpūr I. The text, probably composed sometime during the 16th-17th centuries, makes extensive use of the technical terminology of the Islamic post-Aristotelean tradition, and is a valuable source illustrating how Zoroastrians participated in the broader intellectual discourses surrounding them. While in London, I also had the opportunity to present a paper entitled “Mullā Fīrūz: A Parsi Priest at the Nexus of Zoroastrian Tradition, Indo-Persian Culture and British Colonialism” at the *Zoroastrians Past and Present conference* held in Cambridge on June 7th, which I am currently preparing for publication.

After leaving London, I spent a week in Paris working at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The BNF houses the largest collection of Zoroastrian Persian materials in Europe, which were collected primarily by Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil du Perron (who had visited Surat in the second half of the 18th century and who was the first European to study the Avestan and Pahlavi languages with the Parsis themselves) and James Darmesteter (a leading 19th century Avestan scholar). While in Paris I edited several

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manuscripts (some of which I was able to collate with those found in London) and even discovered a few short texts not mentioned in the library's catalogue of manuscripts. Though one week was not enough time to fully explore the collections of the library, I was able to procure of microfilms of the manuscripts relevant to my dissertation. After Paris, I spent a week in Copenhagen working in the Kongelige Bibliotek. Copenhagen is home to the oldest Avestan and Pahlavi manuscripts in Europe, which were collected early in the 19th century by the traveler philologists Rasmus Rask and Nils Ludvig Westergaard. In addition to working on these manuscripts (several of which have not been published), I was able to photograph Westergaard's diary and correspondence in its entirety. Westergaard, who had traveled from Bombay to Yazd and Kirmān to visit the Iranian Zoroastrian communities, was largely responsible for establishing the historiographical paradigm of portraying Iranian Zoroastrians as the poor, oppressed, and uneducated relations of their Indian Parsi counterparts, and his published account of his trip in the *Oriental Christian Spectator* fueled arguments between the two sects of Parsis in Bombay, one of which (the minority group, known as the Kadmis) continued to acknowledge the priestly authority of the Iranians, and the other (the majority, known as the Shahanshahis) which asserted that the Iranians were ignorant of the religion. This paradigm of the degeneration of Iranian Zoroastrianism marked a radical shift from earlier 18th Parsi accounts, which described their Iranian counterparts as being prosperous and very knowledgeable, and has since been projected back by many historians such that most major histories of Zoroastrianism describe the period after the coming of Islam to Iran as a period of intellectual stagnation and economic hardship. In any case, these original documents of Westergaard provide a wealth of material to more accurately assess his perceptions and to situate him within the intellectual climate of 19th century scholarship. In addition, I was able to photograph some rare Gujarati printed materials that Westergaard had brought back from India which were not part of the British Library's collections.

All in all, I feel that this was an extremely profitable summer. I am spending the current academic year in Gujarat and Mumbai as part of a Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, and the research I conducted over the summer was an invaluable prelude to that which I am pursuing now. I have already collated several of the manuscripts I transcribed over the summer with other copies in the First Dastur Meherjirana Library in Navsari. The printed books have also given me invaluable leads for finding more material here. Thanks in large part to the South Asia Initiative Study Grant, I have amassed a large amount of sources which will be most helpful both for my dissertation and my later career.

Sarah Tasnim Shehabuddin: Rules of Engagement: Women's Rights and Secularist-Islamist Relations

My dissertation project seeks to explain variation in secularist-Islamist relations. The South Asia Initiative Study Grant allowed me to interview several secularist women's rights activists and Islamists in Bangladesh over the summer, in order to develop a clearer understanding of their perceptions of themselves and of each other and lay groundwork for more extensive field research in the future. My research allowed me to refine both my argument and methodology. As expected, the general trend in Bangladesh seems to be intense competition between secularists and Islamists, but I also learned that some

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secularists have engaged with Islamists in projects initiated by international sources of support.

The secularists I interviewed were Firdaus Azim, a women's rights activist and co-founder of Naripokkho (For Women), Faustina Pereira, a human rights lawyer and member of Ain-O-Shalish Kendro (Law and Mediation Center), Dipu Moni, head of the women's wing of the secularist-leaning Awami League, and Tawfiq Nawaz, a lawyer and secularist activist. The Islamists I interviewed included Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, the Assistant Secretary General of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Shamsunnahar Nizami, the head of the women's wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami and the principal of the Islamic International School, Shah Abdul Hannan, a supporter of the Jamaat-e-Islami and founder of two Islamic youth groups (Witnesses and Pioneers), and Nasima Hussain, a supporter of the Jamaat-e-Islami and scholar. These Islamists represented a wide range of views on women's rights and the opportunities for cooperation with secularists.

Establishing myself as a neutral scholar was a challenge. Some secularists expressed concern about my plan to interview Islamists as well as secularists. During my meetings, I tried to discuss and address their concerns about my methodology. I also encountered attempts by Islamists to figure out my position on controversial issues. Intense debate and even violent rioting characterized spring 2008 in Bangladesh due to a rumor that the government intended to give women equal rights to inheritance. One Islamist activist asked me what my position on the issue of inheritance rights was. In methodology courses, I had learned that we should always try to shift the focus back to the interviewee when asked about our personal views. I said that I did not know much about inheritance laws and wanted to hear more about her position. I was surprised however when she pushed back and said, "I'm sure you know something. Tell me. What do you think about this issue?" This caught me off-guard and I answered her question, but also realized that I would have to invest the time and effort necessary to preparing for such questions about controversial issues before I begin conducting more in-depth field research. It is not always possible to deflect questions. I have to strike a balance between presenting my views when asked and minimizing their impact on my interviewee's responses.

In addition to showing me how to refine my methodology, my discussions also allowed me to refine my argument. I learned about instances of interaction between Islamists and secularists that were facilitated by foreign sources of support. In 2006, for example, the Asia Foundation asked the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) to produce a pamphlet about women's rights within an Islamic framework. The BNWLA organized discussions between its own members, classically trained Islamic scholars and Islamic thinkers and activists, including two supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami. During the meetings, there was debate about various interpretations of Islamic laws affecting women, more often between the classically trained scholars and an Islamic thinker named Shah Abdul Hannan, whose views certain members of the BNWLA considered closer to their own views on women's rights. It is possible that had it not been for the Asia Foundation's decision to commission such a project and the BNWLA's decision to do the project, such interaction would not have taken place. Information about interactions that defy the general trend of polarization allowed me to refine my argument about the conditions under which secularist-Islamist cooperation occurs.

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My discussions with secularists and Islamists gave me the opportunity to refine my argument, establish my credibility as a scholar, address concerns about my research, develop invaluable contacts, and strengthen my prospectus, which my committee approved on November 10, 2008. I am confident that my future field research will benefit both methodologically and theoretically from my research experience over the summer.

Zubin Shroff: BRAC Bangladesh: A financially sustainable healthcare model

I spent my summer working as an intern at BRAC, Bangladesh. BRAC (Building Resources across Communities) is one of the largest developmental organizations in the world employing over 100,000 people and having approximately 8 million members. What marks the organization apart is the commitment to holistic development as well as taking programs to scale while trying to maximize financial sustainability.

The BRAC Health Program is one of the main components of the organization. Through its cadre of *Shastho Shebikas* (Health volunteers), BRAC aims to provide basic health services to a large proportion of the countries' 140 million people.

I was keen to explore innovative financing and payment mechanisms for health systems and thus conducted a survey on people's willingness to pay for a hypothetical package of health services, assessing preferred package design along with the factors that explained this preference. I conducted the survey in a large slum in Dhaka, Korail which houses close to 30,000 people. Through cluster sampling I interviewed, with the help of a fellow intern and a translator a total of 124 households.

The initial portion of the survey consisted of gathering preliminary information about households, including the age and sex composition and occupation of the highest earning member. The next part started by offering people two alternate health packages, one covering primary care, the other hospitalization expenses. The coverage offered by each of the two packages was of a different value (since primary care would tend to be used by everyone whereas hospitalization is a relatively rare event.). The respondents were asked to pick a preferred package. After doing so, we asked them their willingness to pay for such a package by quoting a starting price which was the same for both the packages throughout the survey. If they agreed to the starting price we increased our price till they disagreed with it and noted the last agreeable price as the willingness to pay. If disagreeable to the starting price we went down till we reached an agreeable price which was noted as the willingness to pay. The last section of the survey consisted of gathering information about possible associated factors including income, ownership of capital, and possession of consumer goods and educational level of the highest earning member. In this section we also asked about the number of hospitalizations in the family in the past two years as well as the cost of these events. Our final question asked about people's satisfaction with existent government medical facilities as well as reasons for the same. I hope to be able to use this information as a part of my Masters thesis.

In addition to my survey I had the opportunity to observe other BRAC programs. These included microfinance, non formal primary education, legal education for rural women and the creation of job opportunities through handicraft workshops. What was most impressive was the scale and scope of the organization. It definitely provides a model that needs to be studied in greater detail and emulated in different settings. I am extremely thankful to the South Asia Initiative for assisting me and making this possible.

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Stephanie Spray: Reflections on the Seasons, a series of ethnographic and poetic video works

With the generous support of the South Asia Initiative at Harvard, I spent three months in rural Nepal this summer working on a feature-length film depicting the hardships of one family in Lekhnath, Nepal. Originally I had proposed to begin a six-part video series based on Lekhnath Paudyal's *Reflections on the Seasons (Ritu-Vichaara)*, but upon arrival in the villages I chose another focus when I discovered that one son of my primary informants had joined the Youth Communist League (YCL), the paramilitary branch of the Maoist party in Nepal. Until Pushpa Kamal Dahal's placement as prime minister in mid-August, known by his party name "Prachandra," he and the Maoist party of Nepal maintained YCL camps throughout the country as propaganda training grounds for the extralegal youth strong arm of the organization. While the YCL has gained much press for its activities, primarily the violent ones, in my film work I have chosen attend to the difficult family and village situations from which YCL members often flee. In my film I was still working with the Gaine or Gandharba caste of itinerant musicians, with which I have been doing research since 2002. This summer's work greatly my understanding of their social, political, and cultural worlds by as I attended more carefully to the role of current events in their lives, however elusive and subtle these events percolate and sediment in these rural settings.

The film that will emerge from this has a working title, *As Long as There's Breath*, which refers to a well-known Nepali saying that one of my subjects quotes while filming. The full saying goes, "As long as there's breath, there hope," i.e. there's hope as long as one lives. This saying suggests that hope is existentially vital and sustaining (sonically reinforced because the word "aas," hope, is resonant with "saas," life/breath). What I seek to evoke in the film is the incongruence between how we might wish our lives to be and the difficult realities we often find ourselves stuck in, which is all the more the case, I believe, in the Gaine village where I was working, where poverty, alcoholism, domestic abuse, and even some forms of mental illness are the norm and impinge upon everyday life.

Although this past summer was very good for my research and film work, I found it incredibly difficult on a personal level because I more closely engaged with the dark underbelly of life in rural Nepal—alcoholism, mental illness, poverty, domestic abuse, sexism, caste discrimination, and the political vacuum found in many villages as it, ironically, fuels revolution and discontent. I hope that my film will be able to engage productively with some of these themes. As a result of this past summer, I decided to take a course with Arthur Kleinman, whose work on social suffering and mental illness I believe will help me better understand what I have seen and experienced in Nepal this past summer.

This past summer gave me further clarity regarding the direction of my dissertation project. By the end of the summer, I realized what I've been doing and what is most important for me in my work in Nepal is to confront some of these demons--poverty and the trauma of everyday life--since these seem to be what underline the Gaine and their extended community's experiences on a fundamental level. I learned much about various strategies that people employ in the face of hardship, from resistance to or utilization of the state through legal and political avenues, banal and everyday resistance mechanisms, to retreat and anesthetization. Many anthropologists highlight and think of resistance with

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regard to state formations; While this has certainly been an important and evident tactic for many Gaine, as they form organizations and allegiances with other dalits and take part in more overt political practices, I want to attend to the more subtle political practices found within families and smaller communities as they struggle to survive marginalized lives in rural Nepal. I see these two realms, the overtly political and the local and domestic, as not only in conversation but mutually constitutive. The task ahead is to begin to understand the relationship between political practice at the social level and political tactics on the local and domestic level. While I think numerous projects in Nepal have examined the higher level of political practice in the social, I plan to take the "low road" to examine certain practices in the domestic as they are in conversation with the "high" and to draw out how the two are mutually constitutive. These insights have been made possible through my engagement with this film project this past summer and the continued work I am doing in post-production with the support of the Film Study Center at Harvard.

Although I have been going to Nepal for a decade now, I believe that my understanding of Nepal and my place in it matured in unexpected ways, which can only benefit my film work and scholarship there. I am grateful to the South Asia Initiative for allowing me this opportunity. If anyone at the SAI or its donors would be interested in hearing more about my summer, my film project, or Nepal in general, I will be more than happy to speak with them at greater length (Email: sspray@fas.harvard.edu, phone: 256-797-3162).

Julia Stephens: Competing Legalities: Colonial Law and the Faraizi Movement in Bengal, 1830-1857

I used my South Asia Initiative Summer Grant to conduct preliminary dissertation research in libraries and archives in London, Lahore, Patna, Calcutta, and Dhaka. The grant allowed me to conduct general exploratory work related to my research on the relationship between colonial law, nationalist politics, and Islam during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I was also gathering materials for two specific projects, one involving Faraizi peasant protests in the nineteenth century and another focused on a specific trial, popularly known as the "Great Wahabi Case." In addition to my research, I used a portion of my grant to fund Bengali language tuition with a tutor in the evenings.

My research was most fruitful for the second project. The trial involved the detention in 1869 of an elderly Muslim businessman, Ameer Khan, on suspicion that he was contributing funds to an anti-colonial *jihad* being fought on the north-west frontier of colonial India. Within Anglo-Indian law, the trial set an important legal precedent for the limitation of the right to habeas corpus in India due to the threat of religious fanaticism and anti-colonial resistance. In London, I was able to gather government records on the policing of suspected Wahabis in the 1860s and 1870s from the Judicial Records in the India Office Collection of the British Library. I also consulted newspaper reports of the trial from several Calcutta and London papers held on microfilm in the British Library. In Patna, I examined rare Urdu and Persian books in the collection of the Khuda Bakhsh Library, including a biographical account of some of the leading families involved in the Wahabi movement and two poetic accounts of the trials and arrests of suspected Wahabis. Rather unexpectedly, I also found a collection of Judicial Proceedings on the Wahabis in the National Archives of Bangladesh, including files on the sale of Ameer Khan's property after his conviction and the colonial administration's decision to release

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convicted Wahabis in 1877 and 1883, materials not contained in the records held by the India Office in London.

The materials I gathered over the summer have been crucial in allowing me to expand earlier research on the trial of Ameer Khan in order to juxtapose narratives drawn from official records, court proceedings, newspaper reporting, and family and local histories. By bringing together a multi-vocal narrative of the trial of Ameer Khan and the Wahabi movement, I have tried to argue that the official construction of the fanatical Muslim Wahabi as a threat to the British Empire was challenged by competing arguments about the relationship between religion, law, and politics in colonial India. During the course of Ameer Khan's legal ordeal, a courtroom of public opinion formed in which journalists and lawyers in Patna, Calcutta, and London argued that the official view of the threat of the "Wahabi conspiracy" was overblown and the suspension of key judicial rights in India set a dangerous precedent that threatened the rights of all British subjects. Family histories written by relatives of the Wahabis have attempted to write them into the official history of Indian nationalism, emphasizing the political over the religious meanings of the movement. This semester I have presented this research in papers at the Annual Conference on South Asia and the American Historical Association.

In Lahore and Calcutta, I conducted preliminary inquiries into newspapers, journals, and court records I hope to use during my dissertation research. The Punjab Public Library holds a large collection of Urdu books, newspapers, and journals from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that will be a key resource for looking at popular and scholarly debates about colonial law, Islamic law, and nationalist politics. In Calcutta, I began the process of securing access to nineteenth-century court records held in the High Court. These records, which are largely un-catalogued and in many cases untouched since the nineteenth century, could contain a wealth of information about legal negotiations over family, property, religion, and the colonial state. After several weeks of speaking with officials and judges at the Court, I was able to spend some time looking over trial records at the very end of my stay, and I plan to return to the Court on future research trips.

Gitanjali Surendran: Kutiyattam, Kathakali and Tullal: Caste, Gender and the Many Meanings of Performance in Kerala

I arrived in Delhi on 16 May and left for Kerala on 4 June. This summer, I decided to base myself in Cochin and Shornur where the Kerala Kalamandalam is located to engage in dissertation research that would form the basis of the dissertation prospectus. I contacted a number of people at Margi and Napatya, leading institutes and non-government organizations involved in the teaching and performance of Kuttiyattam, said to be Kerala's oldest dance-drama form. This time I was hoping to focus on three different forms and examine the inter-relationship between them. Unfortunately as I settled down to the task of talking to performers, I realized that the source base for this project was limited and would take a lot of work to find sources for this study. I next went to the Kerala State Archives in Cochin where again, I felt that it was going to be very difficult to find primary sources for this study of the inter-relationship between caste, gender and performance. Eventually, I was able to unearth a few autobiographies/memoirs of major performers from the 1920s and 30s which though difficult to get through, were quite informative.

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I continued to work on improving my Malayalam as it was clear to me that to really understand the limited source material available vis-à-vis temple record and inscriptions, I would need to have a very high degree of proficiency in the language.

Besides learning the language, this year I was much more mobile traveling to a number of different smaller towns and villages to visit performers. So while I spent the bulk of my time in Cochin and Shornur visiting temples and the temple theatres where the Kutiyattam performances took place (and sometimes, still do), I traveled around to watch dozens of performances of Kutiyattam, Kathakali and Tullal (that last of which I had not seen during the last summer I spent in Kerala). I enjoyed watching the manner in which true connoisseurs interacted with performers after the performance, commenting expertly on the performer's style and interpretation in the case of the more elite forms of Kutiyattam and Kathakali. In a sense, watching these performances was an important ethnographic experience for me. The dynamic of audience participation during the Tullal performances was however quite different where people, expert and non-expert, stood in circles around the performance area and actively participated in this much more ritual performance. I think that an ethnographic study on connoisseurship and audience participation in performance is a possible project for the future.

My summer in Kerala was therefore, once again a very rich experience for me. While I was disappointed with the range of sources available for the study I had proposed, a number of other future avenues for research opened up for me during my time in Kerala and I hope to develop some of these into a dissertation project. For instance, I discovered this summer that Kerala had had at one time a robust Buddhist tradition and a number of rare Buddhist texts that can no longer be found anywhere else in India (and possibly the world) are housed in Thiruvananthapuram University's Oriental Studies Institute and Library. This opens up a number of questions that I would certainly like to explore in the future.

Gitanjali Surendran-- SAI research grant funding report, November round

I applied for research funds from the South Asia Initiative in November in order to conduct research in Calcutta and London for my dissertation prospectus which I was due to present at the end of January 2009.

I arrived in Delhi on 16 December and left for Calcutta on 20 December. I spent an extremely productive week there. I located at least three different source caches for my research on the "Indian Discovery of Buddhism" and collected a number of pamphlets and publications by Buddhist reform organizations like the Mahabodhi Society and the Bengal Buddhist Association. I also interviewed a number of members of these organizations besides spending time at their respective headquarters to get a sense of their activities. I also visited a number of scholars of Bengal including Tapati Guha-Thakurta who provided me with valuable leads for my investigation into modern Bengali Buddhism. At the National Library, I traced the collected works of at least one famous littérateur-reformer, Rahula Sankrityayana. I also looked at the National Library's newspaper archives which has a valuable collection of short run Buddhist/reformist newspapers and periodicals. At the Asiatic Society, I located the journals of the Buddhist Text Society established by Sarat Sen, a British spy in Tibet turned Buddhist scholar, in the 1890s besides a number of early publications on Buddhism dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I also hunted for and located two Buddhist

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temples which represent an interesting history of international Buddhism in Calcutta, built as they were with Japanese and South East Asian money. Finally, I visited the Indian Museum, India's first museum which was originally established in order to collect Buddhist artifacts and monuments. In fact, I was able to find some interesting publications dating to 1914 on Buddhist collections and the manner in which they were acquired for the museum and the chief archaeologists involved there in.

With the important literature I was able to gather in Calcutta, I was able to draft the first version of my dissertation prospectus while in Delhi for the last few days of 2008. On Jan 3, I left for London, where I spent a week at the National Archives looking for files on Sri Lanka and Burma, and at the British Library's Asia reading room, looking for files on the various people and organizations I had found in Calcutta as well as Burma office collections. I also looked at the newspaper collections in Collindale, especially *Daily Telegraph* for which Edwin Arnold, the author of the *Light of Asia*, wrote. I was able to get addresses (to look up when I return to London for a longer research trip) for British Buddhist reform organizations dating back to the early twentieth century and for the London offices of the Mahabodhi Society.

I was able to use this information as well for my dissertation prospectus. Thanks to the generous SAI grant I was able to formulate my dissertation research project and gain a number of leads for further research in the coming year/s.

2008 SAI RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT: GRADUATE STUDY

Tariq Omar Ali: Economic Ideas in Agrarian East Bengal

I am utilizing the GSA fund for further research into my dissertation project on the political economy of jute and ideas of development and poverty in eastern Bengal, from the 1850s to the 1970s. The grant will support two research trips - to the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. and the British Library, London. The Library of Congress possesses an impressive collection of Government of Pakistan publications, in the 1947-71 period. These publications speak to the postcolonial state's ideas of economic development, poverty alleviation, and agrarian policy-making in the jute growing tracts of East Pakistan. The second research trip to the British Library, London, will take place in late May/early June. I will investigate the vernacular tracts collections, particularly publications in the small towns of deltaic eastern Bengal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I hope to gain an understanding of the intellectual spaces of mofussil towns closely linked to the jute economy.

Lana Dinic: Field Study of Public Health Systems in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, India

As a developing country India struggles with many health issues pertaining to the resource scarce settings. Infectious disease, especially tuberculosis, poses a significant health burden to India in general. However, the state of Kerala has been used by health scholars world wide as a model state; delivering adequate health services to its population while still operating on a restrictive budget.

The situation in Kerala is unique since the health indices have increased, however the income has not. Kerala attributes its successful health delivery to many factors. At the Achuta Menon Center for Health Science Studies in Trivandrum, Prof. Raman Kutty

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suggested that the development of the health system in Kerala can be attributed to history, social and political atmosphere as well as the public policy. He attributed the encouragement of women's education and use of western medicines (vaccines) to Kerala's maharajas, who have set the stage for a highly educated society with interest and activism in political sphere including the overturning one of the strictest caste systems.

Furthermore, since the 1980's government expenditures in health have been significant aiding to the development of the health sector. The health care financing comes from the public sector, which has managed to decrease the disparities among the people while increasing life expectancy. A negative indicator of higher living standards, which is present in Kerala without the increase in wealth, is the increase in the prevalence of lifestyle diseases such as high blood pressure and obesity.

Successes of the Kerala's public health system were demonstrated through the activity of its advanced institutions: the Sri Chitra Triunal Institute of Biomedical Technology and Achuta Menon Center for Health Science Studies. Students from all over India come to study public health at the Achuta Menon Center as well as the Center being a home of the National Conference on emerging issues in Public Health. The research in the Sri Chitra Triunal institute has pioneered devices such as producing an artificial heart valve at low cost.

That does not say however, that Kerala does not have many struggles ahead. Unfortunately today with the appearance of private health institutions, the governmental institutions are losing employees and are finding it more difficult to bridge inequality in health care that stems from the income gap. Therefore, for a state of Kerala finds itself in a developing country and operating on a developing country's budget tackling the developed world health problems. Kerala is dealing with unique health reforms and serves as an example to health systems in India and the rest of the developing world.

In addition to analyzing the success of the Kerala public health system through the educational institutions named above, the field study took us to an independent organization trying to improve health in the communities situated around Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. This organization is the Shanti Ashram. The Ashram serves as an example of an individual's effort in improving public health in the community.

Ashram is involved in a comprehensive improvement of public health. It organizes educational workshops to inhabitants of the villages to raise health awareness as well as implementing technologies to make the people's daily lives safer (such as improving the design of the cooking fire pits). The Ashram also built local schools in villages and educated village inhabitants to be teachers. Among many, the Ashram's most successful program is the community micro credit program. By providing micro loans to women the Ashram helped empower women in the communities, provide them with a profession and generated extra income for their families.

Our study of the health systems of Southern India was concluded by the health services provided to the tea plantation workers by the initial owner of the plantation: the TATA Company in Munnar. The plantation has recently been re-distributed to the workers. The public health facilities established by the TATA group remain and offer the most advanced amenities. From local health centers offering vaccinations and general checkups, as well as, collecting health data the Munnar, the tea plantation has a secondary health center and multiple day care centers for children of the workers. The

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organization of the company provided an example of successful, yet socially responsible business aiding to development of the community.

The field study to the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu provided examples of educational, non-governmental and private institutions successful in significantly improving the quality of health for their population. The research they have performed as well as policies implemented are invaluable examples for other states of India as well as the rest of developing world in their effort to improve their own health systems. In my future endeavors of implementing public health policies, the experience and knowledge gained while visiting India in January 2007 will be essential for making the best decisions.

Suvranil Majumdar: Winter Research in South Asia

I am a 2nd year Master's in Public Policy student at Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. I am working on my policy paper which deals with the civil nuclear cooperation between USA/Europe and India that will form the basis of enlarged bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy and research. Several private (foreign and domestic) and public sector companies are interested to invest in this huge opportunity. They are however concerned about higher level of risks involved in this sector. More importantly, they are concerned about the lack of well defined policies on nuclear power in India.

Scope

With regard to this development I would like to evaluate the areas which need to be considered.

- Key business, social and economic considerations for US and European companies before investing substantially to launch a nuclear power program.
- Focus on issues of finance and global competition in the commercial nuclear supply chain among different countries.
- Assessment of current infrastructure in India. Can the nuclear program be sustained in India?
- Suitability of the sites already selected by NPCIL; land acquisition issues; environmental clearances; and, especially, power transmission infrastructure (limited capacity in existing trunk lines).
- Fuel supply constraints.

India Trip

I would like to thank SAI for funding my trip to India. I went to India to conduct my research where I interviewed a lot of people from the energy industry. I went to Mumbai first and met people from Reliance Energy and Areva and learnt their views on India's potential in this sector. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) helped me with scheduling the different appointments.

After Mumbai, I went to Delhi and Gurgaon to meet representatives of NTPC and met CII Mentor Tarun Das. I asked questions related to the scope of my topic.

Based on my research in India, I was able to list down the high level challenges faced by multinationals in India and finally came up with recommendations to address these problems.

Recommendations

1. Assisting the Indian Government to come up with clear legislation on Liability and Private Sector Participation (even try to lay out the future advantages of having an

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independent regulatory body).

2. Strong Partnerships with NPCIL.
3. Explore other revenue streams in front end and back end nuclear projects. Support the Maintenance of Existing Nuclear Plants.
4. US should request for appropriate areas designated for setting up their plants.
5. Building trust among the local people before setting up of nuclear plants.
6. Setting up educational and training institutes.
7. Discuss the issue of uninterrupted fuel supply (through long term contracts) and reprocessing of fuel in the context of proliferation and IAEA safeguards.

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Vinita Andrapallyal: Maoism Reconsidered: An Examination of the Senderista and Naxalite Thought

I spent almost three weeks in New Delhi, India doing archival thesis research. I chose New Delhi because it was the home to the Indian National Archives as well as the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum and Library, one of the foremost social science libraries in the country. My thesis focused on comparative Maoist movements, and I was spending time in India studying the CPI (ML), also known as the Naxalite movement. Therefore, I needed to find primary and secondary literature and articles relating to the movement.

My thesis question has to do with the recruitment of Indian tribals into the movement, and so I was searching for literature related to the sociopolitical situation in North-east India, the rise of Maoism in India, tribal mobilization and anything written by the Naxalites relating to these topics. I was able to find most of what I needed at the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum and Library, while the Indian National Archives proved rather unhelpful, as the Defence Department had yet to declassify the documents relating to the Indo-Pak War, which would have been relevant to my work. The JNML was a spacious, modern library housed on the sprawling estate of Teen Murti Bhavan and I spent much of my time scanning microfilms of Naxalite writings and perusing secondary literature on tribal politics in Northeastern India and the CPI (ML).

I also had the privilege of meeting with a professor of social science at Delhi University, Nandini Sundhar, and a Ph.D. candidate in history at Jawarharlal Nehru University, both of who gave me a bit more direction in my research. I have never formally studied South Asian politics and there are few South Asianists studying government at Harvard, so it was especially valuable to meet with these academics.

Spending time in Delhi by myself was an eye-opening experience for me. My parents are from Kerala, in the southwest of the country, but the last time I visited New Delhi was about eight years ago. My time in India had previously been spent in villages and small towns with family. Two weeks in the heart of one of the world's largest cities, however, showed me a different side of India. Being alone and unable to speak the language beyond rudimentary phrases was also new for me. I found Delhi to be a vibrant, cosmopolitan city with many more foreigners and a lot more wealth than I was accustomed to seeing in India. Riding the Metro and navigating the well-designed highways and circles made me feel like I could have been in any major metropolitan area in the world—but watching cows hold up traffic near South Block, beggars chasing after

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foreigners at the India Gate, and auto rickshaws careening through dusty thoroughfares convinced me otherwise.

Natalie Bau: Research at the Centre for Micro Finance

Motivation: I chose to work with the Centre for Micro Finance for a variety of reasons. I had been involved in economic research in health research at the National Bureau of Economic Research for the past two years. Working on a research project with CMF allowed me to use much of the same skill set (data analysis, programming) while working on a related topic I found more motivating – micro health insurance in India. Additionally, working with CMF brought me into contact with new aspects of economic development research such as the management of data collection, which is not an easy task in the developing world.

As a CMF intern I had the privilege of taking a two-week intensive course on micro development with an intern class of primarily masters and doctoral students at CMF headquarters in Chennai. I was then placed with an individual CMF project – in my case, in Hyderabad. This set up was attractive for several reasons. For someone planning to write a thesis in micro development, the intensive academic program and the exposure to development economics research methodology were invaluable. In the end, my research project and the questions working in rural India raised expanded into my thesis. Additionally, before coming to India, I had never been to non-Middle East Asia or the developing world. Partially, I decided to come to India because it would offer me invaluable firsthand insight into development, a topic to which I had devoted much of my academic studies. It seemed somewhat naïve, even arrogant, to believe I could understand, study, or aid development without this firsthand experience. Indeed, India is often considered the world’s micro development classroom because of the level of ongoing, on-the-ground financial innovation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I went to India because it was an adventure. I was ready not only to escape the “Cambridge bubble” but also to see a whole new world comprised of different cultures and different sets of values. In this, I was not disappointed.

Internship Responsibilities and Deliverables

As a CMF intern, my responsibilities were divided into two major categories, each of which took up about half my time. I helped manage a team of surveyors in rural India who collected data for a randomized micro health insurance impact analysis. To this end, I traveled through rural India on the bus and train system, sometimes alone, monitored the surveying process, was involved in the hiring and firing process, and kept in touch with the project manager who lived in the field. The other half of my time was spent doing data management and data analysis. I supplied SKS Microfinance, the partner firm which offered the health insurance product, with analyses documenting who was enrolling in the insurance, who was making claims, and how the mandatory nature of the insurance in treatment areas was effecting microcredit take up. These analyses were used in a World Bank toolkit that I coauthored and will also be used as SKS decides how to alter and expand its insurance. I was also responsible for cleaning the baseline data for the impact analysis, which had previously been collected in the project. I began to make inroads into this mammoth task as an intern at CMF and now continue the baseline cleaning as a researcher at CMF’s partner organization, MIT’s Abdul Jameel Poverty

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Action Lab. Cleaning the baseline data is integral to its future use in research projects and the health insurance impact analysis.

Personal Experience

Living in South India was an eye opening and undeniably positive experience. I quickly became part of the social entrepreneurship communities in Chennai and Hyderabad and was introduced to the diverse and fascinating development projects of my friends. Seeing the on-the-ground work ongoing in the sector made me realize how insufficient research alone is. I felt motivated to postpone my graduate work and return to India to work with a more applied rather than research oriented perspective. This general feeling of intellectual and cultural exchange was amplified by my housing situations both in Chennai and Hyderabad. In Chennai, I lived in a business school dorm with my fellow interns (who were mostly Indians and Americans). While we all shared a basic interest in development, many of the interns were in their late twenties and had already had substantial and interesting life experiences both in and outside the field. In Hyderabad, I shared an apartment with an Indian Territory Manager for Suzuki, a British expatriate working for a social entrepreneurship venture capital fund, and a Japanese expatriate working in microfinance. We all had a lot to learn from one another's expertise, career interests, and cultural backgrounds.

Obviously, living in India was also an adjustment (the lack of hot water, air condition, toilet paper, inability to communicate). But facing these challenges helped me realize my own adaptability and the basic surmountability of all these things. In a way, stripping the luxuries from my life helped me to focus on my true values.

In summary, my summer in India allowed me to gain new perspective on Indian culture and global culture, as well as the development scene. It also allowed me to really see how people live in the developing world and underscored the challenges of living in a country without basic infrastructure. Finally, it helped me to identify my true goals and ideals and get to know my own strengths and weaknesses.

Catherine Bevilacqua: Indian Outcaste Women And The Outcaste Human Rights Movement

I wish to thank the South Asia Initiative for supporting my thesis research in India: not only has my summer's work given me a stronger understanding of my topic than I had even expected, given the considerable background I already had from my previous visit, but my interviews have contributed to radically changing the angle at which I propose to approach the topic of caste and gender. My research has also uncovered important leads to narrating the Dalit women's perspective, which I will include in my final thesis to the best of my possibilities. I am grateful to the South Asia Initiative for helping me develop my project, to which I am now more than ever committed.

Summary of activities: my research in India consisted of in-depth interviews with important figures in the discussion of caste and gender, in particular a) four prominent Dalit activists, b) non-Dalit feminist academics who were activists during the 1970s and have developed the literature on caste and gender since the 1990s, c) a Dalit intellectual who has contributed to the debate, and a regionally prominent Dalit activist (rather than the above who are national figures).

d) *Informal interviews:* In Andhra Pradesh, I also held two focus groups with local-level Dalit activists in Andhra Pradesh, which provided a different and useful angle.

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Through their State-based organization, *Sakshi* ('Witness'), I informally spoke to four different Dalit women from rural areas about their personal situation and cases, all of which the NGO is currently working on. At Jawaharlal Nehru University, I had a brief but instructive meeting with a prominent non-Dalit feminist who had not been on my list. In Maharashtra, I interviewed prominent local and regional activists, men and women.

- In all interviews with activists and activist-academics, topics I covered fairly consistently were: the interviewees' 'experience of caste,' their personal background and how they got involved in activism (gender- and/or caste-related), when and how the caste dimension became important in their thinking, the current role of Dalit women in the movement, the two challenges to the Dalit women's movement: Dalit patriarchy and non-Dalit feminism, role of the human rights discourse in anti-caste activism, internationalization of the caste issue, the analogy with race or influence of the Black movement (whether or not it had an impact on them), the available literature on caste. Even while I engaged in topics connected to other themes we had discussed, the connecting thread throughout was caste/gender and the situation of Dalit women.

During my research, I traveled to Maharashtra, Bangalore (Karnataka), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Hyderabad and Nalgonda district (Andhra Pradesh), and Delhi. My very first interview was in Cambridge, with Uma Chakravarti whom I later met with again in August. On three occasions my interviews ran for around three hours (in one case, I met the interviewee more than once), while other interviews lasted between 1hr-2hr. Upon my return home up until returning to Cambridge, I transcribed the audio-recordings of my interviews.

The numbers of interviewees are not significant, so much as the relevance of each to the debate on caste and gender or to the Dalit women's movement. They are:

- Ruth Manorama, founder and current leader of the National Federation of Dalit Women, the first autonomous Dalit women's movement after Ambedkar's death. Its birthing process stretched across the late eighties into the early '90s (1995 is the official year of founding). Today, it seems to be less of a movement-like, and more of an NGO-like operation. Note: South India-based, despite national claims;
- Vimal Thorat, part of the mainstream (i.e. non-Dalit) women's movement, then spearheaded the Dalit women's break-away from said mainstream;
- V.Geetha, Kalpana Kannabiran, Uma Chakravarti have all been active in the non-Dalit Indian feminist movement in the '70s and '80s, in different regions. All have academic training and have written about caste and gender. I should note that a **notable absence** from this particular group is Sharmila Rege, whom I have met with once before (informally) and with whom I finally failed to secure an interview after many attempts; I count on making up for this over the phone.
- Paul Divakar, current leader of the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights and part of the Dalit movement since the early '80s;
- Gopal Guru, professor of political studies and Dalit intellectual, well-connected with the grassroots;
- Milind Awad, prominent grassroots activist in Maharashtra with strong academic approach.

Observations:

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a) apart from Sharmila Rege, there are two or perhaps three other interviews I feel are missing from the picture. By the end, I was put onto three Dalit women historians (some of very very few Dalit women in academia) who have researched and written on caste and Dalit women in particular. They are Urmila Pawar, Meenakshi Moon and Pradhnaya Lokhande. Though a brief article authored by two of these academics on the history of Dalit women's involvement in the movement was known to me, it was sadly not until my later interviews that some of my interviewees (Prof. Gopal Guru in particular) explained the importance of their contribution and urged me to include their voices in the project. Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon (based in Pune-Mumbai) have, in fact, written a book in Marathi of which their article in English is a brief excerpt. Frustratingly, there was not enough time to get in touch with them and travel to meet them; I am now in the process of reading their work available in English translation, and am hoping to organize a phone interview. I am also applying for HCRP funding (the only source of term-time funding) to attempt a follow-up meeting in late January. My summer experience has taught me the value of a face-to-face interview, which even a phone call cannot substitute. Not only do the immediate cues and reactions allow the interview to go in interesting directions, but the rapport, key in the kind of personal histories I have been gathering, cannot be established without meeting the interviewee and creating an atmosphere of trust and respect. By January my work will be well underway, and I will be able to integrate the additional material in the appropriate section.

b) changes in the nature of my research material: as I had anticipated in my last meeting with my thesis adviser before leaving and then during our communications from the field, my research did in fact shift from a focused ethnography in one location to a small series of in-depth interviews with experts, both activists and academics, around the issue of caste and Dalit women in particular. This was productive towards understanding the intellectual history of the caste/gender discourse, and has oriented my thinking about the theoretical discourse in connection with the Dalit movement in ways I don't think I would have gained access to through an ethnography; differently put, the main difference is that I have a strong grasp of a particular phase for caste theory and for Dalit women (as the most direct stakeholders in a gendered theory of caste), whereas through the other approach I would have had a very good sense of a particular group of Dalit women activists and their relationship to the existing scenario. I changed my approach mainly because I felt I would be able to access the theoretical discourse more directly, and I was more excited about that; also, the language barrier was frustrating, and presented a serious limitation to my possibilities. Both Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh proved that, though I was able to collect important contributions in terms of the activist perspective, which I will hopefully be able to put to use with some translating help.

On the downside, of course, so far I have privileged the 'stronger' voices in the debate in certain ways. Now that all is said and done, I do still feel the need to give voice to Dalit women themselves and not just to those who speak on their behalf. I have realized that this absence is not so much the problem of my summer research, as an in-built condition within the topic I am researching that needs to be discussed: if Dalit women had sufficient space and visibility to articulate their own problems, this would indicate that their status must already be less underprivileged than it currently is. On the contrary, their relative silence—or the lack of echo to the voices of the few leading academic and activist Dalit women in India—is consistent with a larger context of oppression. At the

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same time, it seems all the more important to include their voices in my project, which motivates my hope to still be able to interview a few key figures I was able to identify by the end of my summer's work.

c) Importantly, my research has underscored the point that understanding the connection between caste and gender is not just a question of rearranging priorities to focus on those at the most extreme end of the spectrum, Dalit women; rather, it is necessary to locate the centrality of gender to caste in terms of the structural, patriarchal mechanisms that constitute and perpetuate caste. Understanding the highly gendered nature of caste, of course, can have strong implications for activism (and is beginning to have them, though not entirely explicitly in some ways). Thanks to my research, I have a completely different grasp and clarity in terms of the connections between theory and movement, and even the development of that theory and the movement.

Rachel Carpentier: Advanced Tamil Language Study

Compared to the sparsely populated northern Indian region of Ladakh where I spent my time studying Himalayan Buddhist art and architecture last summer, Tamilnadu is like another country. If south India were a nation separate from the rest of the subcontinent, Chennai would be its undisputed cultural capital. However, I made my home this summer in the Tamil temple city of Madurai. Though home to a permanent population of about 1 million, Madurai boasts an airport with but two gates and not a single industrial building shares the skyline with the magnificent Meenakshi Amman Temple. Once the capital city of the Pandian kings and the third and final location of the Tamil Sangam ancient literary society, Madurai receives significant attention from scholars and tourists alike, both Indian and foreign. Studying a language that has the distinct honor of being both ancient and modern in a city often referred to as a "big village" alongside graduate students who have not only more education than I do, but also a clearer conception of what they plan to do with their knowledge was intimidating, to say the least. However, Tamil now rolls off the tongue more easily than it did in June, I have another place in the world to call home, and I have forged academic and personal relationships that I intend to maintain.

Daily language classes ranging from magazine and newspaper reading to grammar construction and recipe translation trained me not only in the four aspects of language learning – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – but provided cultural context for every interaction I had, both inside and out of class. The structure and regularity that the American Institute of Indian Studies syllabus lent my time in Madurai was by no means inhibiting; rather, it somewhat eased the burden of my sticking out like a sore thumb everywhere I went. However, on my daily 25-minute walk to and from school, not once did I encounter another foreigner. Madurai is "on the map" for its historic temple, but my side of town across the river from the main tourist attraction didn't see many visitors. One can see how this could be alternatively welcomed and frustrating, and I experienced both on a daily basis.

The opportunity I had to study veena, a stick zither stringed instrument played in south Indian classical music, was priceless, and provided a welcome addition to classroom-style language learning. I studied thrice weekly with a professional teacher and performer, which provided me another opportunity to enrich my Tamil vocabulary and fluency. I had begun the study of veena here at Harvard last spring with Professor

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Richard Wolf, and was able to acquire an instrument of my own to bring home from India so I may continue playing.

Above all, I was struck by the ability of the eclectic religious population of a secular government to live together in Madurai first and foremost as Tamilians, and then as members of their respective religious traditions without sacrificing the importance of faith in daily life. 2500 years of cultural and linguistic history is a lot to be proud of, and the Tamil population I encountered took this very much to heart. I am overwhelmingly grateful for your support of my study in Madurai this summer, and I look forward to returning to Tamilnadu in the near future.

Benjamin Schoefer: Socio-cultural context, social-learning and technology diffusion: the Indian Green Revolution

I explored two India-related projects over the summer and am very grateful for the field research that the South Asia Initiative grant made possible.

The first (political-economy) project concerned the decision-making of India's rural governments (panchayats), which the Indian central government declared an essential instrument of rural development. In fact, devolution of responsibilities from the state governments towards this lowest level of governance were explicitly mandated in recent amendments to the constitution. In particular, fiscal policies are to be delegated to the panchayats from the state levels, both with respect to levying local taxes and spending powers. Yet, little progress towards the mandatory full devolution has been made in most states, and the experiences states had vary. My goal was to explore the reason behind the considerable divergence in both the speed and scope of implementation of the amendments across the states, and the success or failure within the different states. While in India, I obtained data from the World Bank, which covered Kerala and Karnataka, two of the frontier states of the panchayat movement and which I merged with complementary data on political and social characteristics on the village level. I have not yet reached firm conclusions as the empirical side is quite "messy". My particular hypothesis was that the fiscal devolution is more successful in panchayats the electorates of which are more literate, politically engaged and better educated, as these preconditions improve monitoring of fund allocation, the willingness to pay village-level taxes, and the quality of the elite. Similarly, a state should be expected to move ahead faster in the amendmend implentation when these social preconditions in its villages exist.

The second (development-economics) project, for which I conducted field research in Mumbai, explored the industrial organization of the dharavi slum in Mumbai, one of the largest slums of the continent. Yet, despite blatant poverty and disasterous living conditions, it is full of informal entrepreneurial spirit. In development economics, informal activities are either seen as detrimental to the goal of growth as informal businesses in the shadow economy evade taxes and do not comply with regulations; the other view is that bad regulation, government interventions, corruption and overly high taxes are responsible for the shadow economy to emerge – informal entrepreneurs are in this latter view therefore merely involuntarily informal and victims of bad policies. Specifically, I explored the varied steps that the Mumbai plastic recycling supply chain takes, from the lowest parts (women collecting trash in the streets) to intermediary arbitrageurs that fulfill interface functions between the informal (trash women) and quasiformal (dharavi businesses) sectors; and the quasiformal businesses that in the

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dharavi are registered plastic sorting businesses and are in some cases even partially registered and pay taxes. These quasiformal businesses are installed with unstable property rights, which, I claim, limits their ability to collude and make use of economies of scale. Consequently (and to the disadvantage of the informal dharavi entrepreneurs), the formal businesses that then buy off their recycled plastic seem to earn a rent from the informal supplier one level down in the plastic recycling hierarchy.

Aditi Sen: Image and Dwelling: World City and Slum in New Delhi

My project explored the position of urban planning in India today, particularly focusing on housing provision and slum redevelopment policies and their underlying theoretical assumptions about planning, and about the home. I had read much about land adjustment schemes that focused on slum land in India and China and was interested in looking at this more closely. While Delhi and Mumbai are most often covered in the news, I chose Kolkata because of my fluency in Bengali, because I was interested in the ways that Kolkata's reputation as poverty-stricken had affected the discourse of the 'changing city' today, because I was interested in the interaction between communist ideology and planning, and because of the instances of resistance to land acquisition that had arisen in the state of West Bengal starting in 2007.

I chose to work with the Kolkata branch of the Human Rights Law Network because I had read their work on eviction. I helped them finish their Public Interest Litigation campaign against the State of West Bengal on the failed implementation of Below Poverty Line amenities for the poor. Through this process I came to see how the particular political situation of West Bengal, under communist party rule, affects all services for poor.

I next worked with a small organization called the Institute of Social Work, and through them, was able to speak with several women of low socio-economic status about their home life, their experiences of change in the city, and their encounters with the state. Many of the women were pleased to be able to talk about their daily lives, and the directors of the organization are keen to see my final report.

Through this project I more clearly began to understand how starkly different physical realities and experiences of the city can be—how the media and policy makers talk about the 'changing city' but how this is irrelevant to many, how the city is gendered, and how Kolkata's particular political situation is far more significant for policy implementation than for ideology. Conducting research in India for the first time also raised important personal questions about diasporic identity and representation in research.

Madeleine Shapiro: Intern at Asha, an NGO in Delhi, India helping doctors, teaching health

Changing Lives While Changing my Own: My Summer in India

I knew that my internship in Delhi was going to change my life even before I went there, but when my blockmate asked me exactly how that was going to happen two weeks in, I couldn't really articulate it for him. I decided to go to India for a number of reasons, first and foremost being that I knew India was a place where I could make a tangible difference given the levels of poverty, and Asha, the NGO I worked for, was an organization that had the mission I was looking for: to better the lives of the poor first through healthcare but from an overall holistic approach.

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My life-changing experience started in my daily work, where Asha gave me the opportunity to educate, research, and explore my future vocation all in one summer. The majority of my time was spent teaching English and health, the two ways both Asha and I found to be the most substantial in terms of making a difference and helping slum children improve their lives. From my work, both college-bound and young children learned important vocabulary and speaking skills, while adolescent girls learned valuable health information for themselves as well as their friends and families. In addition, I administered a survey of sexually transmitted diseases in one slum, Doctor Ambedkar Basti, where I found that over one quarter of women presented symptoms. From my results I was able to suggest that Asha improve its outreach to women in the slums both through preventative and curative measures. Finally, I spent two mornings a week shadowing a doctor in the polyclinic where I saw everything from pelvic inflammatory disease to the mumps and reinforced my certainty that medicine is the profession for me. The professionals, staff workers, and children I worked with inspired me through their hard work and dedication and made me want to return to India after finishing college this year.

But the life-changing aspects only started with the work I was doing and the people I met; so much of my trip to India hinged on my travel experiences. From visiting the Taj Mahal to hiking in the Himalayas, India opened my eyes to sights unlike any I had every seen before. But it wasn't until my trip to Jaipur that I fully came to understand why this summer would change me. After a long day of sightseeing in the Pink City, our rickshaw driver took us to his guru, who changed my perspective on my life, relationships, and entire experience in India. With his advice, I became much more in touch with my own happiness and ready to make even more of my experience abroad than before. After this trip, my time in India took on a second purpose: not only was I in India to work to better the lives of others, I was also in India to work to better myself. This included challenging myself to do new things, open myself up to new opportunities, meet new people, and reflect on what I really wanted.

This summer was a life-changing experience for the impact I was able to have on others while learning so much about myself and what will make me happy in life. My plan now is to remain in contact with Asha and the people in the slum I worked with and to return to India in my gap year before going to medical school. I hope some day to be able to return to Asha as a doctor in order to give back and have an even bigger impact on India than it had on me this summer.

Zeba Syed: A study of the factors that account for either communal strife or harmony in Hyderabad

This summer, I spent seven weeks in India studying the evolution of Hindu-Muslim relations in Hyderabad. Capital of the central Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad is one of the subcontinent's largest metropolitan areas. The city claims a historical heritage unique from the rest of India; during British imperial rule in South Asia, Hyderabad was not administered by the foreign power. Instead, it remained under direct control of a native Nizam. As a result, at a time when other regions of the subcontinent were infiltrated with Western ideologies, Hyderabad preserved its Mughal and Persian identity. This is evident from the demographics of the city – over 40 percent of Hyderabad's inhabitants are Muslim, while the composition of the entire Indian

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population is only 13 percent Muslim and 80 percent Hindu. Upon setting foot in the city, I immediately sensed the region's distinct Islamic aura. Numerous women clad in full-covering *burqas* bustled through the busy streets and local markets at night. Also, the city is spotted with mosques throughout, and I recall hearing the call to prayer – the *adhan* – resounding five times daily from all directions.

The near equivalent ratio of Hindus and Muslims in the city has manifested itself in heightened inter-religious tensions. Of Indian cities, Hyderabad is especially notorious for its communal friction; reports in 2005 cite that the city is burdened with India's third highest rate of religious riots. One must only glance at reports of brutal human rights violations following the Babri Mosque demolition in December 1992 to get a taste of the ongoing inter-religious violence in Hyderabad. Fortunately, a trend towards inter-religious harmony has been acknowledged in the region; newspapers, city inhabitants, and governmental reports have unanimously identified an ongoing decline of inter-communal hostilities in Hyderabad over the past five years. During my stay in Hyderabad, I sought to identify factors responsible for this evolution in the city's inter-religious relations. One particularly interesting strategy for conflict transformation is the use of interfaith community development centers. The Henry Martyn Institute, where I conducted my research, has set up such development sites in the three most riot-prone areas of the city. These centers include women's tailoring classes, interfaith schools, health clinics, and young men's programmes. I conducted regular interviews at these sites, seeking to shed light on several questions. Through what mechanisms are such institutions, and these specific activities, expected to transform inter-communal relationships? How can they work to prevent future outbreaks of violence? Do attendees agree that visiting these sites has altered the way they view other faith communities? If so, how do these attendees propagate the values acquired at the centers to their families and communities? While the focus of my research is exclusively Hyderabad, I ultimately hope that the lessons learned from this model are broadly relevant to other conflict-prone regions of South Asia and the world.

The days I spent in Hyderabad were filled with memorable moments, some poignant while others frightening, shocking, or exhilarating. In Hyderabad I found some of the most compassionate individuals I had ever met. This was evident on Friendship Day, an annual holiday Indians celebrate on the first Sunday of August. The following day I visited a community development site to conduct interviews. In the morning, an eight-year-old schoolgirl timidly approached me to ask whether I would be her friend. When I unhesitatingly agreed, she drew out a friendship bracelet from her pocket and shyly tied it around my right wrist. Similarly, that afternoon the center's tailoring instructor caught me off-guard when she suddenly began binding a friendship bracelet around my other wrist. "We're friends now, so you must accept my friendship bracelet!" she announced. I was touched by how quickly these individuals welcomed outsiders, and how quickly they were able to unconditionally make me one of their own. It was a refreshing reminder of the sheer humanity that exists in today's world. In India, I was reminded that familiarity is not a requisite for sincere affection. Rather, it is our duty to express such warmth towards everyone – even strangers.

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Michael Kapps: Economic Development of Mauritius: Past, Present and Future

Introduction

I spent the entire summer living on the small tropical island of Mauritius (situated in the Indian Ocean), working for the Government and conducting research into the country's economic development. The reason I chose Mauritius was that I wanted a more intimate experience with government functions and issues related to economic development -- both broad interests of mine at the time. Mauritius, with its smaller government, important role in the South East African and Asian regions, physical beauty and safety and security was a natural choice for a summer abroad. I would like to thank the South Asia Initiative for providing me with much needed funding that made this summer a reality. My time in Mauritius was a profound academic and personal experience for me, and I would not have been able to do it without the SAI's financial support.

Overview of Research

My research aimed to explore explanations for the rapid economic growth of the island nation in the past 40 years. Since its independence from Britain in 1968, Mauritius has transformed itself from a mono-crop economy with an overpopulation crisis, deep ethnic divisions, and labor riots, to a middle-income state with a vibrant democracy showcasing fair elections and a free press. Mauritius has developed resilient institutions in government and law, business, public infrastructure, technology, and education. Its major and capital city, Port Louis, is advanced and culturally diverse. It is difficult to believe that just several decades ago the country was paralyzed with third world conditions. Indeed, attempting to better explain the country's economic growth and ongoing political stability was an academically tantalizing topic for an economics concentrator like me.

During my research, I read through copious volumes of literature and reviewed statistics, interviewed economists and historians, spoke with past and present politicians, and coordinated with my academic advisor. In the end, I was able to address the major research goals I had set out for myself. Firstly, I had developed a more comprehensive explanation for the country's rapid growth which explained the low Gini coefficient it experienced during development and its continual political stability throughout. Secondly, I was able to extrapolate my findings to discuss the implications for other Small Island Developing States. Lastly, I was able to present a clear picture of where Mauritius stands right now: the progress of the various sectors of its economy, current political and social conditions, its geopolitical relationship within the region, and what the future holds for a country facing the burdens of rising energy prices and unfavorable terms of trade.

The research has several implications. Firstly, it reconciles a number of disparate theories and provides a clearer model for how growth actually took place in Mauritius. As a result, it may be useful for other developing nations, particularly Small Island Developing States that may face similar burdens. Additionally, the research provides a comprehensive overview of the current trends and the direction the country is taking, straight from the decision-makers themselves. This may be valuable information for a number of interested parties: business and investment, government and geopolitics, economic development, to name a few. Finally, the research experience has had significant impact on my personal development as well. I have substantially broadened

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my understanding of economic development, having been an active contributor to it during my internship with the Government of Mauritius. I learned how to gather and analyze data as any economist should, and additionally, how to critically analyze information to reach proactive solutions as any policy-maker should. It was the later of these skills that I developed over the course of my internship at the Board of Investment (BOI).

Life on the Island

The Republic of Mauritius is situated in the Indian Ocean just east of Madagascar and has a population of about 1.3 million people, with 100,000 people living in a much smaller island farther east called Rodrigues. About 68% of the population is Indo-Mauritian (descendants of the indentured laborers brought from India to work the sugar cane fields), about 27% is Creole (descendants of African slaves who worked the sugar cane fields before slavery was declared illegal by the British Empire), 3% Asian Mauritian (mainly Taiwan and Hong Kong emigrants) and a small 2% population of French Mauritian (the largely wealthy descendants of the owners of the sugar cane plantations). The island changed hands between the Dutch, French and finally the British before being declared independent in 1968. During colonial rule, it was the site of sugar production, and even today 90% of arable land is dominated by sugar cane fields whose plumes cover the landscape in a plush, snow white blanket. The people are friendly and used to foreigners who flood Mauritius' powder sand beaches each year. Despite a large ethnic and religious diversity, Mauritians are tolerant of one another and generally live in integrated communities, which results in a vibrant mixing of cultures and traditions reflected in the food, music and leisure activities. The capital city of Port Louis is the commercial and government center of Mauritius with a large logistics port, shopping district, and looming skyscrapers flanked by verdant volcano peaks, and is where I spent the majority of my time at the Board of Investment.

On weekends, I had the opportunity to explore the island. I saw various historical sites and the entirety of Port Louis; I visited the Royal Botanical Gardens and the idyllic island Ile aux Cerfs; I tried all the local foods, downing my fair share of Creole, Indian, and Chinese cuisine. Some weekends I did some diving in the azure lagoon surrounding the island: playing with dolphins, swimming with sea turtles, tickling giant moray eels, and frolicking among the dazzling fish and corals. Near my tiny bungalow in the North, I had access to a pristine, powder-white sandy beach which I attended regularly. Some days, I would jog along the coastal road, gazing at the sparkling water as I passed by colonial homes and hotels for the super-wealthy. Nightlife in Mauritius is always a fascinating experience – there are restaurants, lounges, and discotheques scattered throughout the whole island, particularly in Port Louis and in the North where I stayed. The local music and dance is exciting to experience and tells the story of a culture sewn together by a patchwork of ethnic roots. Of course, the three months in Mauritius were not all just play.

Internship Experience

A typical day would have me wake up just after sunrise, don professional business attire, board an air conditioned public bus in the suburban community of Quatre Bornes or the tourist town of Grand Baie (where I spent the first and second to third months respectively), and sit through about forty-five minutes of congested traffic – a smorgasbord of sparkling BMWs, European minis, and bumbling scooters and motor-bikes.

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The Board of Investment takes up the tenth and ninth floors of One Cathedral Square, a newly-built office building surrounded by volcanic peaks with a scenic view of the harbor and the horse-racing track (a national Mauritian pastime). The office is well furnished: a number of conference rooms with leather chairs, flat screen Plasma TVs, and potted plants – it is all to please investors who relieve themselves of hundreds of millions of dollars into the economy of Mauritius. The Board of Investment (BOI) is a government agency that seeks to provide all the information on local business conditions, navigate the laws and regulations for investment activities, and generate linkages with local and international companies. The BOI also spends an extensive time advising on domestic policy changes, agendas for Prime Ministerial meetings with other world leaders, trade policies and various arrangements with organizations like the UN, World Bank and IMF. Indeed, the agency is significantly involved in the development of the country and has been doing its job quite well: of all 175 investment promotion agencies in the world registered with the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies, the Mauritius BOI was ranked number one for policy and planning last year. For a country whose government budget is scarily small, foreign direct investment represents one way of successfully modernizing and developing the economy -- thus the importance of the BOI and the work that I helped accomplish.

In my three-month-long internship, I fit in somewhere between enticing investors and advising the economic direction of the country, relying on the best of my knowledge from the literature I had extensively been reading on economic development and sticking to the basic principles I had learned from my first year at Harvard College. To say that I had just learned about the economy of Mauritius is to make an egregious understatement; indeed, my three-month stint was all about learning how to think critically, responsibly and creatively. That is why along with the report I present, I also make a note to strongly encourage Harvard University to further build upon its relationship with the Republic of Mauritius. I urge Harvard University to drastically expand programs for study in Mauritius, funding for internship opportunities at the BOI and other agencies, recruiting programs for Mauritian students as well as other initiatives that would lead to mutual growth between Mauritius and Harvard University. I know that I will certainly keep up contact with the island, as I will serve as a liaison for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the BOI in North America, carrying out research, meeting investors, and organizing missions. As Harvard has often stipulated in the past, it is time to expand upon its horizons, push its students to new global challenges, and address a little-known corner of the world that has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

2008 SAI SERVICE IN INDIA INTERNSHIPS

Valerie Chadha: MimoFinance

From June 2008 to August 2008, I interned at MIMO Finance, a company in Dehradun, India that offers sustainable microfinance services to women in poor households. The opportunity to intern at MIMO Finance allowed me to delve into the workings of a microfinance organization in a country about which I knew relatively little, despite my heritage. I chose this internship because I could explore microfinance hands-on and

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experience living in Dehradun, India without the comforts I'm accustomed to at relatives' homes in Delhi.

MIMO Finance is a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) that began operations in March 2007. It focuses on providing financial services to women in its efforts to strengthen small businesses and encourage financial self-reliance. The company utilizes the Joint-Liability Group method, in which five clients agree to guarantee each other's loans, thereby reducing default rates and transaction costs. It offers its micro-loans at an interest rate of 18% and it funds operations by offering equity shares and by acquiring loans at an average interest rate of 12.5%. As a for-profit organization, the company refuses to accept grants and donations.

In March 2008, MIMO had ten branches serving over fifteen thousand clients and it continues to augment its networks and client base. MIMO concentrates on providing micro-loans of Rs. 5,000 to its first time clients. It offers Rs. 10,000 loans for those seeking more funds, and it is currently piloting a Rs. 25,000 Home Improvement Loan. The company is creating a credit-scoring tool for its future individual loans, too.

I was involved with MIMO Finance's first attempt to assess the impact of its microfinance services. This project required traveling to various branch locations in teams of two interns, with a MIMO Branch Head guiding us to client's households and translating our questions. Working alongside Erin Yu, another Harvard undergraduate, I traveled to the Haridwar, Sahaspur, and Dehradun branches, interviewing clients about how they utilized the micro-loans and whether the loans contributed to growth in family incomes. Most loans were used to fund small businesses, although several clients did use portions of their loans for consumption. This project culminated in a compilation of fifty of case studies, which MIMO Finance could show to potential investors interested in the social benefits of MIMO's services.

One of the most memorable interviews was with Rekha Gupta, a storeowner in Haridwar. Rekha overheard Erin and I speaking to another MIMO client and demanded that we speak to her as well; she was eager to narrate her success story. Surprised that I could speak Hindi conversationally, Rekha related to us that she used the Rs. 5,000 loan to open a food store in her local neighborhood. Earning profits of up to Rs. 200 daily, Rekha funneled the money back into her business, increasing the product variety and adding new furnishings to the store. She envisions opening a hair salon, and employing local women to manage the enterprises.

The second project on which I embarked involved evaluating the full-branch and mini-branch bank models employed by MIMO Finance. The full-branch model at MIMO Finance comprised of nine Field Executives, who distributed loans and collected payments, and one Branch Head that oversaw operations. The mini-branch model included just four Field Executives and one Branch Head. As MIMO expanded operations, its COO sought to determine whether it was most efficient to convert all its branches to the mini-branch model. I decided to complete the quantitative aspect of the project by examining each branch's operations and finance in terms of efficiency and productivity. Discerning that the Field Executives at the mini-branches managed greater case loads and earned more revenue than those at the full-branches, my report recommended that MIMO Finance should continue to create mini-branches and eventually convert its existing full-branches into mini-branches.

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Additionally, I contributed to various daily activities at MIMO Finance. The Human Resources department assigned me to work with one of the interns from IIT Mumbai to evaluate employee performance. I also interviewed applicants for the Field Executive position at one of MIMO Finance's new branches and drafted a pitch book outlining MIMO's finances for potential equity investors, too.

While working at MIMO Finance was the main priority in India, I also traveled to local religious towns, such as Rishikesh and Haridwar, as well as major cities, including Delhi, Chennai, and Mumbai. Among the greatest challenges was traveling by public transportation, which not only included uncomfortable seats and no air-conditioning, but it also required that I dress conservatively. Although I have traveled to India several times with my family, this was the first time I ventured on public buses and I never realized how a great deal of Indians still expect women to dress traditionally. Indeed, it was quite a shock when my tank top attracted unwanted attention during my visit to Rishikesh. Despite these minor troubles, public transportation was always an adventure and I particularly enjoyed the daily vikram rides from the guest house to MIMO Finance's office.

In another instance in Chennai, I grasped how prevalent the traditional views towards women still are in India. Talking to a nineteen-year-old Tamil girl, I discovered that her family expected her to marry a boy of their choice after she finished her studies, allowing her to sacrifice her education to become a housewife. In fact, the girl hoped to marry her cousin, a preference that I only encountered in Jane Austen novels of the nineteenth century. While such actions are considered as norms in southern India, I had previously believed these were fading customs present in only small, rural villages. Noticing that these gender roles are still very prevalent in large cities like Chennai was surprising, and I began to understand my perceptions of India relied heavily on my views of my family in Delhi and Mumbai, which are not representative of the greater population.

After living in Dehradun and interacting personally with Indian residents, I have developed an attachment to India that never arose from my previous visits with my family. My experiences illuminated that I still have a lot to learn about Indian culture and customs and I hope to continue my travels to South Asia in order to acquire this knowledge.

Amardeep Grewal: Asha Community Health and Development Society

Traveling to India this past summer to help out at ASHA has been one of the most rewarding experiences that I have ever participated in. When I first told my family about my plans to go to India, they thought I was out of my mind. How would I travel half way across the world to New Delhi, a city where I knew no one and didn't speak the native language of Hindi? Little did I know at that time all the battles I would have to overcome in order to finally reach India. After having my visa denied, I almost gave up all hope. Fortunately, however, all things went alright, and I arrived in Delhi in the end of June. In Delhi, I met the amazing team members at ASHA and was assigned to work in Mayapuri. Mayapuri, a slum located in West Delhi, lies alongside a railway track between two main bridges. My first visit to Mayapuri was eye opening. Of course, I always used to see the humanitarian commercials on the tv, in which they show destitute children lying on the side of the street. Little did I think that such conditions actually existed. Not only do they exist, but the real conditions are much worse. When I first stepped out of the vehicle, I

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looked around, and saw half naked children with dirt on their faces, walking through metal yards with broken glass all around them. At Mayapuri, I learned about how the staff works to empower the people that live within the slum. Forming teams of Community Health Volunteers, Bal Mandals, and Mahila Mandals, ASHA tries to give the people of Mayapuri a sense of ownership over their everyday lives.

Working in the clinic alongside Dr. Sanghamitra and Devin was such a great and educational experience. I learned about many tropical diseases, and was also able to assist the doctor when she performed antenatal checkups, and administered nebulizers to asthma patients. I learned how to perform general examinations, and also about symptoms to look for to determine what type of disease a patient is suffering from. Dr. Sanghamitra taught me to use my own intuition, and to use my own skills, rather than simply rely of new technologies, which try to perform a diagnosis independently. Assisting in the Well Baby clinic showed me how much the children benefit from the immunizations that they are given. At the same time, I was able to perform field research in the slum on the topic of Malnutrition and Diarrhea. Devin and I would go out into the slum with a staff member and go to the slumdweller's homes to ask them questions about their children. In the end, we were able to conduct over two hundred interviews with people from all across Mayapuri.

Although as first I was hesitant about teaching English to older children within the slum, the afternoon English class that we taught became part of my favorite hour of the day at Mayapuri. The children who would come to our class were filled with so much excitement and enthusiasm. They sat there trying to learn English, because they realized how important it is for them if they want to attend college and get a good job. This year, we were able to hold a workshop for the kids from the ASHA slums who gained admissions into university. These students asked us questions about what to expect in college, and we were able to form bonds of friendship with these children. ASHA is doing so much for these children, and I've learned how big of a difference care and interest can make in the life of a child. These college bound students represent the role models for the younger children in our afternoon English class. Besides teaching English, we were able to assist in the computer literacy class. Because these children are never given the opportunity to leave the slum, Devin and I thought it would be great to go on a field trip. After having taught the kids the names of animals in English, we took them to the Delhi Zoo, where they were able to wander around and see all the different animals. After the Zoo, we went to India Gate and Children's Park, where the kids could relax and be kids. In the slum, there are so many children, yet there is so little childhood. These young kids are forced to grow up quickly, so that they can begin to provide for their families. At the park, we saw these kids act like children- their smiles and laughs were priceless.

I most definitely will spread the word about all of ASHA's work at Harvard, and in my home in Detroit. When I went to Punjab to visit my family, they were all so impressed by all the work that ASHA was doing in Delhi. To them, Delhi was simply a place filled with corrupt individuals. However, they were amazed by the good work and care that the people of ASHA showed towards the less fortunate.

I would like to thank Dr. Martin for providing me with this amazing opportunity. I will never forget my time with ASHA, and one day I definitely want to return. I now know that I wish to enter a career in Medicine and Public Health. There are so many people out

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there that deserve equal rights to healthcare, but are simply denied it do to economic reasons. There needs to be more doctors out there like Dr. Martin who care about these individuals who are so deserving of such care.

Mihir Gupta: National Institute of Health & Family Welfare

This research project was motivated by a desire to explore public health work on HIV/AIDS from a unique perspective – one far different from the cultural and economic landscape of public health in the United States, where I have grown up. I chose to travel to Allahabad, a city in the northeastern state of Uttar Pradesh, India. The research opportunity in Allahabad entailed both urban and rural components, which I reasoned would provide the broadest scope of cultural exposure. In terms of research, this opportunity allowed me to meet with support groups, assist in surveys, and get a detailed look at many components of the government-run healthcare infrastructure.

Aside from the eye-opening research opportunity (summarized below), my journey to India was an unforgettable voyage into a society very different from the one I have grown up in – and yet, one that has put my daily experience in perspective. I had never had to face the discomforts of living without electricity for most of the day, or traversing through mud, rain and tropical heat simply to do a day's work. I am struck by the dedication of people to persevere in these circumstances – people such as the tireless social workers on our team or the physicians giving their time to the most needy patients in rural communities, when they could be practicing in an air-conditioned private clinic for higher salaries. The individuals who left the most lasting impact on me, however, are those living with AIDS. In the face of a crippling disease, social stigma, and poverty, these men and women have the courage to say “we have overcome so much in life, so surely we can overcome this too.” My meetings with them will not be forgotten soon.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and the infrastructure to combat the disease in urban and rural areas in and around the city of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.). Government HIV/AIDS resources and awareness-raising efforts have only recently been brought to U.P., which was thought to have insignificant rates of infection compared to states such as Tamil Nadu. However, it is now generally agreed upon that HIV/AIDS prevention measures must be undertaken all across India. Failure to do so will result in rapid spread of the disease, which is already beginning due to increased mobility between urban and rural areas, lack of awareness, and scarce availability of contraceptives. In the past three years, the Indian government has collaborated with many non-governmental organizations (NGO) and corporate partners to create a network of resources to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially in states such as U.P. where there was little focus on HIV/AIDS before.

The research pursued was divided into two parts: first, a broad survey of urban and rural health infrastructure, and second, the initiation of an HIV/AIDS awareness survey in a rural village. Several case studies were taken throughout, based on in-depth interviews with HIV-positive and at-risk individuals during field visits. Activities and field visits in Allahabad's urban sector included the following:

- Training with social workers in Allahabad.
- Field visits to find Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), a group at high risk for HIV infection from sharing needles. These individuals are predominantly young men

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- of low socioeconomic status in the inner city. Satisfying their costly drug addiction drives them into deeper poverty and frequently criminal activity, pushing them further outside social networks and under the radar of government detection. Government and NGO-sponsored clinics and health camps have started making inroads into this population.
- A meeting with a support group for homosexuals, another group at high risk for contracting HIV. Support groups are organized in secret by government and NGO workers because of extreme social stigma against this population. Secrecy must also be maintained because of frequent police brutality. Like IDUs, homosexual individuals are also forced outside mainstream society, limiting opportunities for economic empowerment. Fortunately, hundreds of individuals in Allahabad are now linked to groups that provide much-needed financial and moral support.
 - Visits to each center in the urban government-run HIV/AIDS infrastructure:
 - o The Integrated Care and Treatment Center (ICTC), where individuals receive their first HIV test, along with pre- and post-test counseling
 - o The Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) center, where HIV-positive individuals receive regular checkups and free distribution of ART
 - o The Allahabad Network of Positive People (ANP+) office, which holds regular support-group meetings open to all HIV-positive individuals
 - o The Community Care Center (CCC), a free clinic where HIV-positive individuals can stay for up to five days to receive counseling, medical care, and moral support from Outreach Workers and other HIV-positive individuals
 - o The Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT) center, where pregnant HIV-positive women receive medicines to prevent passing on the disease to their children

Several activities in rural areas were also pursued. All field visits were to Koraon, a block approximately 90 km south of Allahabad, comprised of several dozen villages and population just over 300,000. Activities included:

- Field visits to disabled people's upliftment efforts. These included education and vocational training for the blind, disabled and mentally retarded.
- Meetings with Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women in several villages. SHGs take a small monthly fee from each member and collect their savings in the Grameen Bank. Their savings later form a pool from which each member can take a loan to start her own business, buy livestock, educate children, etc. Some SHGs have started income-generating projects, while others have a long way to go.
- Organizing a full-day health clinic in a rural village through collaboration of several NGOs. The vast majority of health problems stemmed from malnutrition, which can potentially be ameliorated by raising livestock and nutritious crops.

Finally, a survey of out-migrant workers was initiated in Kurhara, a village in Koraon. Out-migrants are those individuals who leave the village for at least three months at a time to work in large cities like Delhi or Mumbai. While away from their families, men often engage in unsafe sexual activity with HIV-positive partners. Upon returning to their home, they may infect their wives, who may in turn bear HIV-positive children. The

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purpose of this ongoing large survey is to collect information relevant to future awareness-raising efforts on a broad range of health issues including HIV/AIDS.

Out-migrants are predominantly employed in security services; manual labor and mill/factory work in metropolitan cities. Their wives tend to the children and family farm during their absence; almost none work outside the home. A major gender gap in knowledge of HIV/AIDS was discovered: while out-migrant men have basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its routes of transmission, their wives have largely never heard of the words HIV or AIDS. Women are much less willing to talk openly about any health issues, especially relating to sexually transmitted infections. The gap in awareness and openness may be traced to the lack of education for women, and a social structure that assigns women as homemakers and men as breadwinners. The survey also revealed a high infant mortality rate, which is likely due to malnutrition, preventable infection and failure to receive vaccinations and pre- and post-natal medical care.

The full descriptions of the aforementioned activities were compiled into a report, presented to my supervisor: Dr. Madhulekha Bhattacharya, Dean of India's National Institute of Health and Family Welfare. The report also included recommendations for future action, largely focusing on uplifting women and increasing rural access to education and healthcare infrastructure.

I am very grateful to the South Asia Initiative for supporting my research. I look forward to learning about other grantees' research as well.

Tess Hellgren: Global Crossroad

This summer I was fortunate enough to be able to visit India with the Global Crossroad volunteer/travel program. For four weeks, I traveled throughout Northern India and volunteered at a rural orphanage outside Faridabad. I have long been interested in Indian culture and had looked forward to visiting India for years – and I can honestly say that my month-long experience was amazing, everything for which I had hoped and more.

The program began with a week in Delhi, learning basic Hindi and visiting sights in the old and new parts of the city. It was wonderful to share this experience with the other volunteers from around the world, none of whom I had met before. Eighteen of us were squeezed into a small Gurgaon apartment with sporadic power outages in the middle of peak summer heat, and yet we all got along so well and were incredibly excited to be there. I was also able to help the cook in the kitchen everyday and practice my Hindi with her.

At the beginning of the second week, our group dispersed to several orphanages; I was posted with four other volunteers at Karm Marg, located in a rural village outside Faridabad. The orphanage was privately run, truly an oasis for the children there – from the moment of our arrival, little details like painted handprints on the walls and marbles inlaid in the sidewalk showed that this was a place made specifically with the children in mind. While all of us had expected to help with such tasks as cooking and cleaning, we found that our attempts to help most often got in the way of the children's efficient routines. In the end, we realized that our presence was most appreciated when we just spent time playing, talking, drawing, and helping with homework. I taught several girls the South Asian fusion dance I learned at Harvard, in return learning Bollywood songs from them. Whether making chapatis for dinner, helping with algebra homework, or

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discussing perceptions of American politics, I was continually impressed by the children's energy and maturity.

Karm Marg was run without real adult supervision; while the older Uncle and Auntie spent most nights there, the day-to-day life of the children was run on a hierarchical basis, with older children taking care of younger and overseeing the daily responsibilities. The children ranged from age 3 to age 19. There were many siblings, and most had either previously lived on the streets or had outside family unable to care for them. Karm Marg allowed them to go to school everyday; obtain useful skills working in the Karm Marg carpentry, paper-making, or sewing shop; and come home everyday to play cricket, draw, and jump rope in a truly reinforcing community. At the same time, it was amazing how content they were with so little – each child had a locker that held virtually all of his or her belongings. Seeing their situation made me acutely aware of the size of the backpack I had brought for only a month-long trip. In our two weeks there (much too short a stay), we five volunteers had much to get used to, from taking showers under an outdoor tap to eating with our hands. But being with the children at Karm Marg taught me to be thankful for so much in my life and to rediscover the joy in the simple pleasures of life, from drinking chai twice a day and eating samosas for a birthday celebration to teaching the boys a magic card trick and letting the girls braid my hair. The individuals I met there had some of the strongest, most beautiful spirits I have ever encountered – my time at Karm Marg had a profound effect that has changed my perspective forever.

The unbelievable cultural experiences I had during my trip were also absolutely wonderful. During my stay at Karm Marg, I was able to visit both the Ganges River and Mumbai on my weekends off. Our trip to Haridwar and Rishikesh was incredibly moving as we participated in a ganga aarti and immersed ourselves in the Ganges, later hiking up to a hilltop goddess temple the morning we left. In Mumbai I stayed with a good friend, experiencing the vivacity of such a cosmopolitan center and the incredible diversity there. Especially profound were my visits to Mahalaxmi Temple and Haji Ali Mosque. After my weekend in Mumbai, I rejoined the other Global Crossroad volunteers for a final week of travel throughout the Golden Triangle, visiting Jaipur, Agra, and Mathura before returning to Delhi to fly home.

I loved my entire experience in India. There were certainly adjustments to be made, but I was fortunate enough to be in the company of like-minded individuals who were incredibly open to new experiences and who stayed optimistic even when the situation was difficult. I don't think I realized how much I was impacted by the trip until I sat on the plane to return home; never have I been so reluctant to return home from a trip. For the next few weeks, I effectively spent my days in denial – I made chai twice a day, listened to Bollywood music, and immersed myself in the Mumbai novel *Shantaram*. It was honestly only my trip to China two weeks later that allowed me to begin living in the present again. This reaction was very interesting for me, and has only reinforced my desire to return to India as soon as I am able.

The cultural and personal experiences I had in India were absolutely priceless – and I am so incredibly thankful to the South Asia Initiative for having made this wonderful journey possible.

Chiara Kovarik: Cross-Cultural Solutions

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This summer, I interned for the organization Cross-Cultural Solutions, a non-profit organization which sends volunteers and interns around the world to live with, work with, and help local communities. I spent time as an intern in CCS's program in the town of Dharamashala, nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Himalayan mountains in the Northern Indian region of Himachal Pradesh. Since visiting Pakistan in 2001, I have been interested in South Asia, especially in terms of what life is like for the women and children. In addition, as a Social Anthropology major, I am fascinated by other people and their culturally-specific ways of life. Thus, when the opportunity arose to intern in India, I accepted with the hope of learning more about the people and the area of Dharamashala, a fascinating town that is not only a stronghold of traditional Hindu Indian values, but also the home-in-exile of Tibet's Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

My internship focused on elementary education, and my time was spent working in a small community school for mentally and physically challenged children, founded by CCS staff and previous volunteers. Initially, I did not know what the specifics of my internship placement would be beyond the broad arena of education, so upon finding out that I was placed in a school for mentally and physically challenged children I was surprised and quite apprehensive. Having never before worked with handicapped children, I had no training in the area, and I also spoke no Hindi. I quickly realized, however, that I had no need to be apprehensive, for any help was greatly appreciated. The school, known in the town only by the name "Special School" was lacking in resources, trained staff, and support. I learned within my first few days that mental and physical retardation is considered a huge social stigma in India, and that life prospects for the handicapped, especially in small rural towns like Dharamashala, are few and dismal.

The school had four sweet, eager students ages 7 to 17: Anchaal, Dimple, Mithu and Ravi. While some families supported their child's education, other families resisted providing them with schooling and did so only after much urging from the school's founder, a prestigious community member. One of the challenges I had to overcome was learning to understand the cultural ideas that underlay these modes of thinking, which are so different from the way we have come to view mental retardation and physical disability in the United States. I engaged in discussions with community members and teachers concerning what retardation means in the social context, and I found that doing so helped me to better understand what I needed to give to the kids as well as how to address the community members more effectively.

As an intern, my job was to help the instructor with lesson plans in basic subjects like English, Hindi, Sign Language and Math, as well as work with the kids on fundamental life skills. We worked on hand-eye coordination with games and puzzles, personal caretaking like brushing teeth, washing hands and preparing basic foods, and bodily movement with exercises and dancing. In addition, a new school for the kids, funded by a previous volunteer, was in the process of being completed in the next town. In my free time, I walked there and helped to decorate the school with artistic murals and educational drawings, like alphabets, numbers, and color charts. Upon my leaving, each room of the new school had been decorated in a beautiful way that encouraged an environment of both learning and play.

Being in India was a phenomenal experience. I felt like I was living in a kaleidoscope of color, noise, movement, smell and taste in which every one of my senses was activated continuously. Meeting the people who lived in the community of Dharamashala was

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unquestionably the most rewarding experience of my stay. Because Dharamshala is home to both a large Tibetan refugee community and the local Indian people, there is a fusion of cultures that I found absolutely fascinating. I had many in-depth conversations with the locals as well as with some friends I made in the Tibetan commune up the street. I learned a lot about the animosity and misunderstanding that exists between the two groups, which is exacerbated by Western influence in the region. On a more personal note, I realized that I am fascinated by the immigrant and refugee experience and I hope to further my study of these areas and incorporate it into the subject of my thesis next year. Another important lesson I learned is how NGO's work in the world – what their role is, how they operate in the local and global sectors, and most importantly, how they do or do not successfully integrate themselves with the local community in order to have a positive impact on the people they are hoping to help. From this internship and my summer experience I have learned many valuable lessons which affect the way in which I view children, education, mental and physical retardation, growing communities and developing countries, as well as how volunteering and international aid work operates and what I hope to further explore in my educational and career paths.

Spencer Livingston: Grama Vidiyal Microfinance

In the summer of 2008, the South Asia Initiative provided me the means to embark on the greatest adventure of my life. I was introduced to a world I had only read about, and my life perspective has been forever changed. I hope this short essay conveys both the wonder of my experience and a humbled thank-you to all those who made it possible.

In March of 2008, I received funding to work in Chennai, India at a microfinance organization called Grama Vidiyal. The reason for my interest in working at 'GV' was two-fold. First, I wanted to see and experience more of the world. I have traveled very little internationally and I have never been exposed to developing countries. After spending so much time at Harvard learning about these societies and economies I yearned for a first person experience. Second, I am considering writing a senior year thesis on the viability of a Sharia-compliant microfinance institution. Basically this would be a bank that provides loans to very poor Muslims in accordance with the rules of Islam. After receiving an internship at Grama Vidiyal working directly under the CEO, I decided this was the best option to fulfill both these desires.

For the next few months I planned the trip and tried to gather as much information from students who have had similar experiences. The South Asia Initiative hosted a number of panel meetings and explanatory sessions that provided me with great advice and eased my nerves about traveling abroad. The final itinerary was to work for 6 weeks in Chennai and then travel around South East Asia for another three. The included a 10-day trip all around South India and then up north to see the 'Golden Triangle.' (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur) After this, I planned to meet up with a friend and travel to Cambodia, Vietnam, and China.

When reflecting on the trip I remember it as two distinct but equally memorable experiences: work and travel. The six weeks in South India working at Grama Vidiyal were more challenging than I had expected. While the organization itself was a great place to work (it was recently awarded the 'Top Microfinance Bank in India'), I underestimated how difficult the language isolation would prove. Other than a select few workers, no one spoke fluent English and I did not come into contact with a single tourist.

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This made communication in the workplace difficult but more importantly I realized that my greatest asset was to edit and proofread the firm's English statements. These proofreading assignments lasted a few weeks but soon I was assigned more important and interesting work. The project I took greatest pride in was re-writing the annual report. Because the bank was transitioning from a non-profit to a non-banking financial institution, a strong annual report was needed to give to possible investors. When the work experience concluded I was sad to leave my new friends but excited to begin a great trip.

The next three weeks of travel contained some of the most enjoyable and most taxing experiences of my life. I journeyed on a student's budget, jumping from hostel to hostel and cramming into the craziest trains and taxis I will ever use. I kept a journal that I just recently re-read and took hundreds of pictures that chronicle the trip. I spent ten days in India, six days in Cambodia, five days in Vietnam, and four days in China.

I thank the South Asia Initiative more than I can express for the opportunity they provided me. I understand this is an operation supported by donors and I hope one day I will have the means to provide a student an experience like mine because I will always remember how much it meant to me.

Gary Pelissier: India Schoolhouse Fund

Whenever I told a classmate what I intended to do with my summer, the reaction was always the same: "you're spending your summer in India? Why?!" And I think the reason behind why my classmates were so astonished was why I was so inclined to go to India: it was foreign, it was far, and it was someplace I had never been. In fact, prior to this summer, I had neither left the country nor traveled alone before. With this in mind, it was the prospect of a challenge that initially caused me to focus on finding internships in South Asia.

Ultimately, I narrowed down my prospects to settle on the India School Fund (ISF), a nascent nongovernmental organization started by five Harvard Business School students whose project was to create a rural school system in India that would equip the villagers with what they considered entrepreneurial skills. It was a project that I thought had huge amounts of promise, would be an excellent opportunity to live and observe Indian life, and of course, would be a challenge.

I was taken on as an intern with the charge of developing curriculum and advising health care in the village. Ultimately, I created the fourth grade science curriculum for the rural school. While this project consumed most of my five weeks in the village, I also sat in on classrooms, helped teach the children English through rhymes and games, and visited other NGOs and schools in India to evaluate how ISF could improve. In addition to evaluating and consulting on nutrition in the village, culminating in proposing a mid-day meal program. I also visited with government nurses, food preparation centers, and builders to investigate and establish the logistics of the plan. Unfortunately, time did not permit me to see this project to completion, but I am happy to report that it is a project that ISF is continuing, and hopes to finish within the year.

But in addition to the terms of the internship, perhaps what was most influential to ISF was the insight I gave the organization. Being a start-up NGO, many of the board members in America had a great deal of disconnect with the realities in India. In fact, the majority had never been to India or the school; those that had visited, had not stayed for

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an extended period of time, had only been there for a few days. In contrast, I lived in the village and “on the ground” of ISF for five weeks. Although this discovery – made after I landed in India and realized I was without much real support - was disconcerting and frustrating for an intern, I think my frustration delineated a major flaw in the organization of the NGO. Upon my return to America, I met several times with members of the organization, and made many suggestions. In fact, I’d like to say that my dual purpose as an intern was to serve as a NGO consultant in addition to the more tangible contributions I made in India.

As for living in India, the best way to describe my experience was wild. India is a country of contrasts: the angular and modern American Express building juxtaposed with the squalor of a tent city; the motorcycle traipsing through acres of farmland; the villager who cannot afford clothing for their child, but has a mobile phone. Modernity and tradition are clearly in contention with each other, as India seems to be wrestling with the question of identity as changes sweep through the country. Village life, of course, was somewhat insulated from the blatant ‘Westernization’ of New Delhi, where a mall can be found on every corner. Nevertheless, even in the village were televisions and refrigerators (although rare) found, despite intermittent (and also rare) electricity. These contrasts made for a colorful and vivid experience, which was both wonderful and admittedly frustrating at times.

In addition to visiting New Delhi, Mathura, and Agra, I also trekked to Darjeeling in West Bengal. Definitely the highlight of my trip, this week-‘vacation’ was incredible. It gave me the opportunity to see another very different part of the country, while literally cooling off from the heat of Uttar Pradesh under the July sun. I visited a tea garden, watched the sun rise over the Himalayas, and ate entirely too much Tibetan food. If we ignore the precipitously perilous taxi ride up to the Queen of the Hills, as well as the 36-hour train ride from Mathura, it was perfect.

After eight-weeks of excitement, wonder, frustration, and sometimes even anger, I was ready to come home. But, as I hope the reader can gather from my recollections of my summer, I left something unexpected and more than just the feeling of triumph after completing what was perhaps the most challenging period of my life: I walked away with a new appreciation for other cultures (and of America!), I left with a practical look into the realities of non-profit work, and I left with a new perception of India and developing nations by seeing first hand the changes that are currently being wrought. In short, while I left with my eyes narrowly focused on the challenge, I left with my eyes wide open to the realities of development and of the world.

Katherine Tygielski: Care and community in an orphanage, Tamil Nadu, India

For the Fall Semester of 2008, I spent twelve weeks in the rural Tamil Nadu, followed by a three week backpacking trip in India's deep south. I traveled through Projects Abroad, a volunteer umbrella organization, and I was placed in Sivasalem, a small village approximately 30 kilometers south of Tenkasi in the Tirunelveli District.

My primary daily activities centered around teaching and caregiving in the community. My mornings were spent in the village's nursery, where I served as a preschool teacher for up to 25 two-, three-, and four-year olds. My responsibilities included bathing, changing, feeding, leading songs and games, and administering first aid. I introduced the children to English through picture books, children's songs, and by repeating everything I

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said both in Tamil and in English. By the end of my stay, most of the children could count to ten and used words on the playground such as “Push me,” “faster,” “wait,” “water,” and “stop.” I also instigated a two minute “time out” policy for hitting, kicking, and biting, the first non-violent disciplinary action to be used in the nursery. Over the course of my twelve week stay, I saw a drastic decrease in the number of instances of violence among the children.

After lunch, I walked to the Athiri Kala Nilaya Middle School down the road, where I taught a Spoken English class; my class consisted of twenty students in the sixth standard (eleven- and twelve-year olds). I developed a curriculum that combined teaching English and examining American culture—beyond typical grammar exercises, I read fairy tales popular in America, taught new words through photo albums, sang English songs (particularly ones with related hand movements), kept the class updated on the 2008 election, and played games like Charades and Simon Says.

After Spoken English class, I spent the rest of the day caring for and tutoring the children at the Santhi School for the Deaf. My responsibilities included playing with the children, resolving conflicts, serving *mally tiffin* (evening snacks), helping the older students with their math and English homework, and teaching the youngest students English and sign language. Though I knew some American Sign Language, I was surprised to discover that sign language is different in every country. I learned Tamil Sign Language through picture books, Tamil-English dictionaries, and with the help of my deaf, German roommate. I served as a full-time sign language interpreter for my roommate both in the orphanage and during our backpacking trip following our placement.

Mealtimes and late evenings were spent at the orphanage working with the children and teenagers living there. My key duties in the orphanage included serving food, mending the children's clothing, helping the students with their English homework, assisting with festivals and celebrations, resolving conflicts, and dancing, singing, and playing games with the children.

As a VES concentrator, I knew I wanted to work on an art project during my stay in India. I originally intended to work with a 35mm camera, with the intention of self-publishing a book or hosting an exhibition. However, as with many aspects of my first few weeks in India, I was taken aback by the cultural differences in terms of technology. At the sight of a camera, the children (and even the adults) would become overwhelmingly excited and pose for the camera. I didn't have time to even focus the camera before someone noticed it, and using film in favor of digital made the project close to impossible. Instead, I looked for a utilitarian use of my creativity and redoubled my efforts towards a new art project: illustrating and self-publishing an introductory book on Tamil Sign Language. To my knowledge, this is the first book on the subject ever written. With no common written language between the typical volunteer and the deaf students, this book will hopefully jump-start the learning process of a sign language that will be brand new to future volunteers. Copies were also given to the administrators at the deaf school and Projects Abroad, such that they can be further copied and distributed throughout Tamil Nadu. In addition to creating the book, I also put my efforts into bringing an emphasis on art to the orphanage and deaf school. I organized weekly arts and crafts activities for the children during the duration of my stay. I brought paint,

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paper, markers, colored pencils, and glue from America, and I was also able to make the trip to Tenkasi once a fortnight to pick up additional art supplies. For many of the children, this was the first time they'd ever used bottled glue or watercolors! The creativity of the children was astounding, and they were visibly joyful at every opportunity to express themselves through art.

JP Zermeno: Child Family Health International

Coming into the summer before my senior year I knew I wanted to do work in healthcare. While looking for internships early in my junior year I stumbled across Child Family Health International (CFHI). They had everything I wanted in a program. Not only that, but they offered internships in multiple locations all around the world. The program offered hands-on work at clinics and hospitals, with interns performing rounds with the local doctors.

As I searched through CFHI's site, I pictured myself at all the different locals: Oaxaca, Cape Town, Quito, etc. I really did not know where I wanted to apply for an internship. I was leaning towards a Spanish-speaking nation as to keep up my second language. That idea was cut short when I came across the rural and urban rotations in the Himalayan plains internship. Oddly enough, it was not the fact that the program had everything I wanted in an internship that made me decide to apply, it was the pictures they had posted of the area. Everything that I saw in those pictures made me want to be there, in them.

Going into the internship, I knew very little about India. I had read some articles here and there, CFHI sent papers about the country, but I did not have a concrete understanding of what I was getting into. Landing in New Delhi was like nothing I had experienced. The city was swarming with people, constantly moving, unkempt and rugged, yet it had an appeal in its old monuments. For me, Delhi was too congested, but I found solace in the beauty of the historic sites. Luckily I only spent a few days in Delhi before heading north to Uttaranchal.

The megalopolis of Delhi was a first-rate foil to the beautiful countryside. I loved my time in the rural areas of Uttaranchal, which were primarily in the mountains surrounding Dehra Dun. Even Dehra Dun, the newly formed capital of Uttaranchal, was too much of a 'big city'. The infrastructure was not there for the amount of strain the people put on the city. Whenever I could escape, I would; be it in a tea garden or the National Forest Research Institute. I blame my attraction to the rural areas on my small town upbringing. Being in the smaller cities and villages made me more comfortable. The culture shock I found in the urban areas stole away much of the charm that was hidden behind the rusty steel and wooden shacks.

The internship told me a lot about where I should focus my future efforts in international healthcare. I work better in a rural setting, this I understand now. It is also very much in my mind to return to a Tibetan Refugee camp in Mussoorie sometime after dental school. What I saw there and the people I met really boosted my drive to do work abroad in areas that have living situations most Americans could not fathom.