

Kyoto University Global COE

“Reconstruction of the Intimate and Public Spheres in 21st Century Asia”

Asian ERASMUS Pilot Program for the Teaching Staff from Overseas Partners Institutions

Name (First, Middle, Last)	ANUJA AGRAWAL	City/Country of the Home Organization New Delhi/ India
Home Organization (University/ Institute, Dept./Faculty, Position/Title)	Department of Sociology Delhi School of Economics University of Delhi Delhi 110 007 Associate Professor	
Invitation Period	From 24 May 2010 to 21 June 2010	
Counterpart Graduate School/ Center at Kyoto University	Counterpart Professor: Prof. Emiko Ochiai, Prof. Fumiko Oshikawa Counterpart Graduate School/Center: Graduate School of Letters	
Title of Research	The commerce of intimacy (research) and Revisiting the boundaries between the public and the private: Exploring marriage and matchmaking in the contemporary Indian context (teaching)	
<p>1) Title of the lecture if you gave any</p> <p>May 27: The Public and the Private: The framework and its sociological uses</p> <p>June 3: Marriage, Tradition and Law in contemporary north India</p> <p>June 10: Seeking Marriage Partners: New Media and Identities</p> <p>June 17: Cyber-matchmaking and Tele-matchmaking in India</p> <p>2) Title of your presentation if you made any at seminar/symposium/conference; Date and Place; Number of participants (approx.); Organizer</p> <p>‘Prostitution and marriage payments among the Bedias of North India’, 15 June, 2010, Graduate School of Letters, Around 8 participants; Kyoto University Global COE</p>		

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Report on ‘Teaching’

Anuja Agrawal

Visiting Lecturer: 24 May to 21 June 2010

I was a visiting faculty member under the aegis of the GCOE program at the University of Kyoto for a period of approximately a month. During this period I gave a set of four lectures, each of which was actually made up of two one and a half hour lectures. The broad themes of the lectures have been recorded in the Erasmus Program Report Form.

The lectures pertained to the specific theme of marriage and matchmaking in India and it was challenging to communicate the nuances of these issues to an audience which had very little familiarity with Indian society. That the students consisted of those with extremely varied language capacities and different educational backgrounds made the job of the teacher only more challenging. It was also challenging to adjust to the three hour format and to be able to retain student attention during this period.

However, these were all reasonable pressures and the active interest and support of the faculty members was useful in overcoming the obstacles. I believe that the use of visual material was useful to get the requisite student attention and so I used this pedagogic tool freely. I feel that I was successfully able to communicate a set of issues and themes to students so as to invite their interest in this area of study. That some of them have opted to write an assignment for the course, which is entirely optional, is for me an indication of their interest.

I feel that this sort of a course could be even more beneficial to the students if the teacher can be provided some sort of profile of their academic background and perhaps students can be provided with some background readings to be looked into in advance. Further, there could be more room for informal discussion and exchange between students and the visiting teacher.

In sum, the teaching experience at the Kyoto University was quite exhilarating and I enjoyed it immensely.

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Report on ‘Research’

Anuja Agrawal

Visiting Lecturer: 24 May to 21 June 2010

I was a visiting faculty member under the aegis of the GCOE program at the University of Kyoto for a period of approximately a month. During this period I gave one seminar in the Department which was titled ‘Prostitution and marriage payments among the Bedias of North India’ (15 June, 2010). A brief summary of the paper is as follows:

‘The Bedias are a very marginal and stigmatized community in north India among whom the practice of familial prostitution is entrenched (i.e., entire families survive upon the prostitution of Bedia daughters and sisters who remain unmarried). Consequently only Bedia men and very few Bedia women marry. There are a number of significant sociological issues which emerge from such a situation including the question of how Bedia men find women to marry. My presentation focussed upon how the practice of bride price, which is a critical component of Bedia men’s marriages, is construed within the community. I also focused upon the manner in which Bedias construe the giving and taking of dowry which is also practiced among the Bedias under certain circumstances. Given the marginal social location of the Bedias, their constructions of bride price and dowry are significant in giving us a more grounded perspective on marriage payments in north India which have not been much understood from the point of view of such marginal social groups’.

The seminar was attended by approximately eight scholars and students (perhaps due to very heavy rain on that day) and I had very interesting discussions with Prof. Fumiko Oshikawa and Dr Kaoru Aoyama subsequently. I am familiar with the latter’s work and we shared a number of interests in our respective fields of study.

Though my teaching duties did not allow me extensive opportunity to engage in research at the Kyoto University, I did use the excellent e-resources of the Kyoto University library to collect material for a related paper on which I am working. The concerned paper is an evaluation of various feminist approaches the question of sex work.