

**UKIERI** funds research on Children's Rights in India and the UK Law,  
Policy and Outcomes



*As one of the exchange students under the UKIERI Programme I got an opportunity to have a glimpse of the western world for the first time. I have always been very interested in travelling and interacting with people from different places...attempting to make sense of the social situation for my research. I have realised that it does make a major difference in studying any subjective issue by being present at that very physical space, which is, as expected, so different, sociologically culturally and politically from the Indian set up in a more generalist term. As my study calls for a comparative research this visit was most sought at.*

Banasmita Bohra, Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies(CSDS), Delhi has many more such experiences to recount. She is one of the key researchers working under UKIERI Research Award titled- "Democracy and Children's Rights in India and the UK Law, Policy and Outcomes", in collaboration with University of Essex, UK.

This research project aims to increase public discourse and awareness of children's rights and the obligations of states and societies to respect, protect and promote these rights in the UK and India. Theoretically several important aspects of children's rights are being

researched and developed as part of this project leading to this growing field of discourse around this issue.

The field of children's rights is a growing field both in India and the UK and the dominant focus of current work is on policy-related interventions. There is little that allows either practitioners or academics to combine their discursive knowledge of rights with practical field-level experiences that often contradict, question and force us to expand upon existing understandings of children's lives. This UKIERI project, because of the careful thought that went into each of its proposed activities, has enabled this synergy between research and practice to take place at various levels thereby generating a multiplier effect of the benefits gained.

The collaboration has been able to generate a lot of academic as well as advocacy material around the issue of children's rights. The dissemination of this material through CSDS as well as University of Essex networks have helped ensure that the work produced has a multiplier effect in terms of continuing to generate research around this complex topic.

***Some of the milestones include:***

- ❖ Increased knowledge of the use of national and international protocols for institutions working on children's rights, particularly child protection.
- ❖ Widespread dissemination in print and electronic media in India and the UK leading to greater public awareness of child rights.
- ❖ Increased network of established and mid-career researchers across the two countries working on child rights issues.
- ❖ Around 100 individuals in India trained on Human Rights indexing and impact assessments
- ❖ 6 research students trained in statistical analysis (qualitative and quantitative) or equivalent programmes
- ❖ Conference papers published in "Childhood-A Journal of Global Child Research in 2011", an internationally peer reviewed journal which is published annually. This is for the first time that this journal is focussing on Indian Childhood.
- ❖ Active organisation and participation in workshops, conferences and seminars both nationally and internationally



The collaboration had aimed to unite two research centres with a distinguished and demonstrable track record in research ability and innovation. The multi-disciplinary research teams involved in this research consisted of established researchers and academics from the social sciences, as well as experienced practitioners from NGOs and the legal profession.

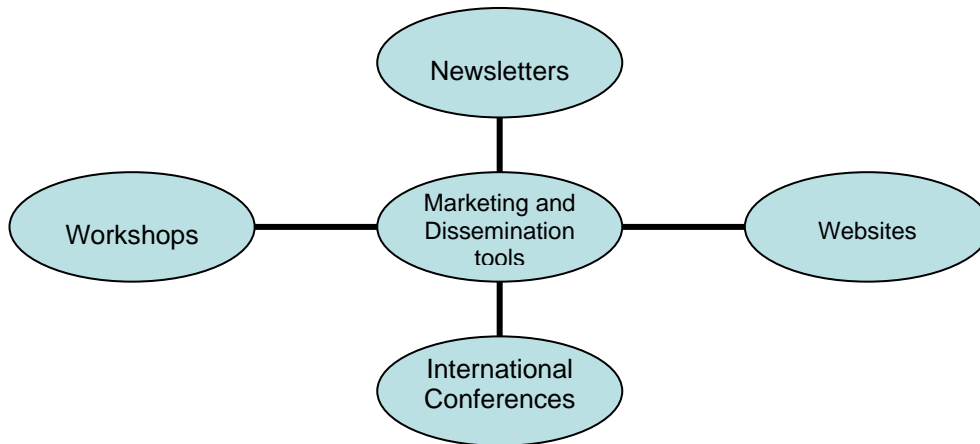
An MOU was also signed by project partners which outlined each member's roles and responsibilities thereby streamlining the internal processes and ensuring accountability across institutions. They had adopted a monitoring & evaluation system whereby each member was responsible to make a report on the project activity undertaken by him/her for overall outcomes. The outcomes of each visit by researchers/fellow/students/ were also regularly documented in the form of reports and was circulated amongst all members.

The success of this collaboration has been due to the planned & systematic approach of the collaborating teams at the time of inception, establishing procedures for monitoring &

evaluation and ensuring that the findings of this collaboration reaches out to a wider audience.

The various marketing activities undertaken to disseminate the project outcomes included:

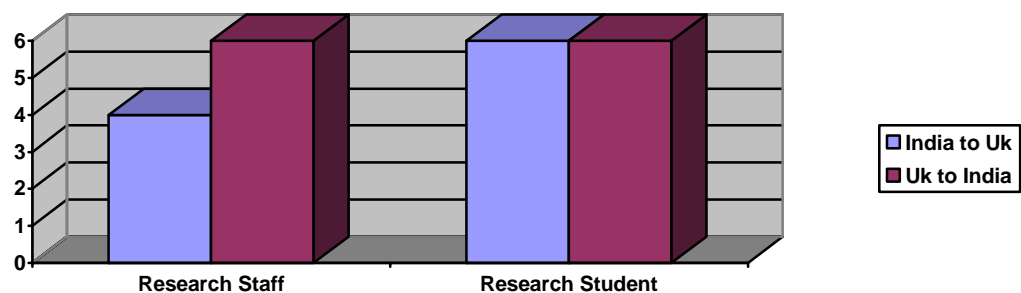
- *The Lokniti Newsletter which is widely circulated among academics both in India and abroad publishes the ongoing activities of the UKIERI project.*
- *The project details are listed on both lead partners websites which highlights the major conferences held under the project.*
- *The information about the activities was also disseminated through flyers, press releases, online mentions and through word of mouth.*



The project has managed to create an awareness in the subject area by organising a number of successful workshops. Apart from four conferences /Colloquiums held under the project, recently a workshop on Monitoring Human Rights: Law and Practice was also organised at V M Salgaocar College of Law. Around 30 students, lecturers and members from the voluntary sector participated in the workshop.

Additionally the lead investigator Prof Sarada Balagopalan has also been invited to share her views in various international & national workshops. Two of the researchers from University of Essex who had visited India and gathered useful information are currently working on Juvenile Detention. This report once published aims to get a wider circulation further disseminating the information and knowledge garnered through this UKIERI collaboration.

A workshop on Monitoring Human Rights: Law and Practice was organised at the V.M. Salgaocar College of Law, Goa which was partially funded by the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex. All logistical support for this workshop was provided by the V.M. Salgaocar College of Law and Children's Rights Goa helped in its coordination. There would be more of such training workshops in other parts of the country as well. A proposal for researchers from India to deliver regular lectures in the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex is also being planned in future.



The collaboration has also successfully increased the number of staff and student exchanges across the two countries. It has been successful in offering an opportunity for research exchange between scholars and practitioners in the UK and India on their experiences of implementing international and national standards and draw on innovative mechanisms and working practices developed in other parts of the world.

The success of the initial two years of this collaboration have allowed partners to learn more about the collaborating institutions, thereby opening new avenues for sharing research perspectives for further collaboration between the partners. It is working towards increasing public discourse and awareness towards a recognition of child rights and the obligation of states and societies to protect, promote and fulfil their rights and enabling effective interaction with the state and civil society organisations on a firmer theoretical and practical foundation.