

AHRC Statement:

My thesis will discuss Reproductive Health [RH] in India c.1947-1994, framed between Independence (through successive family planning campaigns, and the “excesses” of the Emergency), and the International Conference on Population Control, Cairo (considered a landmark event in coalescing ideas about women’s RH and empowerment into population and development thought). Situated within Modern South Asian, Post-War Development, and Women’s Health History, my work particularly draws upon the Population Control Histories of Matthew Connelly and Mohan Rao. However, by locating the problem in the state contexts of Delhi, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, and by using gender as a key mode of analysis, my thesis will contribute to the understanding of how, in the making of the Independent India nation, women’s RH became a strategic site of state and international intervention.

Drawing on reports, journals and correspondence from the archives of Government and International agencies, my thesis will argue that such interventions became increasingly considered as a route to population control, and thereby poverty eradication, ‘development’ and ‘modernization’ in the years following independence. Discussing interactions at the level of implementation, my work will also highlight ground-level experiences and agency. Moreover, by engaging with oral testimony and vernacular press, journals, and women’s magazines, it will also consider modes of understanding RH existing in addition those of international and state actors. Questions include: How were Indian women thinking and discussing their own RH? How did factors such as gender, class, caste and religion influence the way in which the RH agenda was perceived, accommodated, adapted, or resisted?

Key sources and timeline are: **Year 1:** UK: British Library; International Planned Parenthood Foundation Archives. **January 2010:** Geneva: WHO Archives. **March/April 2010:** U.S.: Archives of Rockefeller Foundation; UN; Ford Foundation; World Bank, USAID; Khanna Study. **July/August 2010:** UCSB Punjab Studies Program, Chandigarh, India (6 weeks). **Year 2:** India: National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Planning Commission Archives, Department of Family Welfare Archives, New Delhi; Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh; UP State Archives, Lucknow; UP State Regional Archives Library, Allahabad. An oral project will also be conducted during this time. **Year 3:** UK, writing up.

The thesis will be organised thematically, and chapters will include: Motherhood and Nationhood; Population, Poverty and ‘Development’; Population Control or RH?; Modernities and Identities. Material will be presented and published in conferences and journals throughout the project, with the eventual outcome of a book useful to historians, social scientists, policymakers and health organizations.

My background in History has well prepared me for doctoral research; my PhD will particularly build upon the insights I gained during my MA in the History of Medicine, for which my dissertation focused on the Missionary Maternal and Child Welfare work in South India, 1919-1939. The project will also require competence in Hindi and Punjabi, which I have been working towards. I will also attend language classes at SOAS during 2009/10; and UCSB’s 2010 Punjab Studies Program. The strengths in South Asian and Medical History mean that Warwick will provide the ideal environment for me to undertake my project, whilst Sarah Hodges’ particular expertise in Reproductive Health in South Asia will provide invaluable supervision.