

Institution: University of Wolverhampton
Unit of Assessment: D27 Area Studies
Title of case study: Research on Caste, Gender and Ethnicity of South Asians (including, Diaspora) and its impact on campaigns for legislative changes in the UK and India.
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Dr Meena Dhanda’s research on caste identity and prejudice, through publications and public lectures, was instrumental in the campaign to include caste as a protected characteristic in the UK Equality Act 2010. The resultant Section 97 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, enacted in 04/2013, made it mandatory for the Government to devise a secondary legislation amending Equality Act 2010 to include caste as an aspect of race thereby giving hope of legal protection to victims of caste discrimination. Her primary research on caste identity, a Leverhulme Research Fellowship 2010-12 (Reference 6) inaugurated a comparative (UK/India) discourse on the subject and informed the debate for legislative change. Likewise, Reference 1 informed public debate on gender quotas in the Indian Parliament.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Dhanda, appointed in 1992, researched on identity in her D.Phil., published as *The Negotiation of Personal Identity* (2008). The concepts developed were applied to the neglected area of caste, first in a pilot study (Reference 2), followed by the aforementioned Leverhulme project (Reference 6); to gender, in the debate on quotas in the Indian parliament in her edited book (Reference 1); and to racialized responses to violence against women in the diaspora (Reference 3). Included in her work on the diaspora is her research on the experience of Black and Minority Ethnic students at the University of Wolverhampton. Her publications on *Dalit* identity and ‘reclaiming honour’ address strategies of dealing with ethnicity-related difference in diasporic communities.

a) On Caste and Untouchability

Dhanda made the distinction between ‘acknowledgement’ and the liberal notion of ‘respect’ in her earlier work ‘Openness, Identity and Acknowledgement of Persons’ (in *Knowing the Difference*, ed. Kathleen Lennon and Margaret Whitford, [London: Routledge, 1994]). She applied a critique of liberal ‘respect’ to the case of the ex-untouchable in ‘L’Éveil des intouchables en Inde’ (in *Le respect*, ed. Catherine Audard [Paris: Editions Autrement, 1993]). Reference 1 argued that identity is neither given nor discovered but negotiated. Her work on caste identity highlighted the paucity of primary research on the subject, leading her to undertake pilot studies in Wolverhampton and Punjab funded by the University of Wolverhampton Early Research Award Scheme in 2007-2008, resulting in several presentations in national and international conferences and a journal article (Reference 2).

The Leverhulme Research Fellowship *Caste Aside: Dalit Punjabi Identity and Experience* (Reference 6) was carried out over a period of 22 months (09/2010-07/2012) and involved extensive fieldwork in the form of ethnography and surveys. It focussed on capturing *Dalit* experience both in urban Punjab and in the cities with a high concentration of *Dalits* in the UK, using original mixed methodologies. Dhanda presented eleven conference papers and delivered ten invited guest lectures on *Dalit* experience at national and international conferences and published References 4 and 5, as well as ‘Certain Allegiances, Uncertain Identities: The Fraught Struggles of Dalits in Britain’ (in *The New Indian Diaspora*, ed. Om Prakash Dwivedi [New York: Rodopi, 2013]) (see 5i). Looking ahead, the significance of Dhanda’s work has been acknowledged by a recent commission by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to lead a team of UK academics on the project *Caste in Britain*, with a grant of £33,646, which will inform the Government Equalities Office’s draft of secondary legislation to make caste an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010.

b) On Gender and South Asian diasporic experience

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Dhanda's work on examining different facets of the politics of practical identity assesses arguments for gender quotas in 'Representation for Women: Should Feminists Support Quotas?' (in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35.33, 12-18/08/2000, pp. 2969-2976) which formed a chapter in her edited collection (Reference 1).

Reference 3's demonstration that the involvement of 'honour' in acts of violence should not be seen as exclusive to South Asian communities challenged racialized policy responses to violence against women which run the risk of being more anti-community than pro-women.

In parallel research, Dhanda led a project on the gap in student attainment at the University of Wolverhampton published as a report, 'Understanding Disparities in Student Attainment: Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Experience' (2010). The findings of this project underpinned a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme funded cross-university project *Disparities in Student Attainment* (£190000, led by Professor Glynis Cousins) in which Dhanda was a co-investigator (value: £5724 as 0.1 FTE).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Dhanda, M., (ed). (2008) *Reservations for Women*. New Delhi: Kali Press/Women Unlimited. ISBN: 81-88965-05-7. P xl + 390. (Including 10,026 words critical introduction).
2. Dhanda, M., (2009) 'Punjabi *Dalit* youth: Social dynamics of transitions in identity', *Contemporary South Asia*, 17.1, March, 47-63. ISSN: 0958-4935. (8238 words).
3. Dhanda, M., (2012) 'Do only South Asians Reclaim Honour? State and Non-State initiatives against killing in the name of honour' in the U.K. In 'Honour' and Women's Rights: South Asian Perspectives ed. Manisha Gupte, Ramesh Awasthi and Shraddha Chickerur. pp. 359-412. Pune: MASUM and IDRC. ISBN 978-93-81352-02-1 (13170 words).
4. Dhanda, M., (2012) 'Runaway Marriages: A Silent Revolution?' *Economic and Political Weekly of India* 47.43, October 27, 100-108. ISSN 0012-9976 (10135 words).
5. Dhanda, M., (2013) 'Caste and International Migration, India to the UK'. In *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (4 vols). General Editor: Immanuel Ness (Wiley Blackwell). (3000 words; also published online on 4 February 2013 at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm105/abstract>).
6. Grant: Leverhulme Research Fellowship (£44942) over 22 months, 09/2010-07/2012.

The quality of References 1-4 has been established by external review in which at least two of three reviewers professionally conversant with REF2014 criteria, including a specialist in the field of South Asian studies, rated these outputs substantially higher than 2*. Dhanda's successful application for a Leverhulme Research Fellowship (Reference 6) also endorses the quality of References 1 and 2 above, while the quality of References 3-5 is endorsed by the award of the Equality and Human Rights Commission award mentioned in section 2 above.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**a) On Caste and Untouchability****i) Support for lobbying**

The most significant impact of Dhanda's research lies in its contribution to the recent amendment to the Equality Act 2010 enacted by Section 97 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. This amendment requires the government to draw up secondary legislation for the inclusion of 'caste' as an aspect of 'race'. The vote in parliament in favour of such inclusion was preceded by intensive lobbying by groups such as CasteWatch UK. Dhanda shared her research findings with Lord Avebury and Lord Harries before the Lords debate on 04/03/2013 and, more significantly, before the second reading of the Bill on 16/04/2013, Dhanda was approached by a researcher for Peers in the House of Lords, Dorothy Hughes, for advice (see 5a). Dhanda's contribution to the campaign has been praised by Davinder Prasad, the general secretary of CasteWatch UK thus: 'Dr Dhanda has been one of the most committed activist[s] in our cause. Her research on the subject of caste in [the] UK and her contribution to so many discussions & debates including a conference organised by Sikhs in Birmingham a few years ago was so valuable for our campaign in the early days. [...] Her contribution to [the] Brit Asia TV debate on

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Apache Indian show would be remembered and not many Asian academics have the courage to speak out against caste so openly. [...] If ever any help is required from a Brit Asian academic, Dr Dhanda would be the one who can be relied upon' (See section 5e). Prasad is referring here to Dhanda's presentation 'Caste and Social Cohesion: the limits and potentialities of identity politics', an invited talk to CasteWatch UK annual conference (2008); a lecture on 'The Origins of the Caste System in India' at a half-day conference for the general public in Birmingham on *Working towards a caste-free society* (26/06/2010; audience of over 70); CasteWatch UK panel discussion (02/07/2011) on her published work; and to the TV discussion viewed by 5415 on You-tube (see 5b), compared to 3670 viewings of the Sikh Channel TV debate on this subject aired shortly afterwards. Dhanda has appeared on community TV (see 5c), clarifying the need for legislation, and addressed several community meetings, for example, of 200 Buddhists in Wolverhampton (04/2012), of 100 Ravidassias in Coventry (17/05/2013), and of the UK Ambedkar Society Southall (06/2013).

Dhanda's advocacy in this regard was complemented during the REF census period by that of another UoA-affiliated developing researcher and expert in Sikh studies, Dr Opinderjit Takhar, who also lobbied Parliament in conjunction with Sikh and Dalit community organisations, participating in UK Sikh Channel TV debates on this issue with Davinder Prasad, Chair of CasteWatch UK (08/07/2013) and as a panellist in the debate on caste legislation (10/04/2013), while maintaining a regular dialogue with the Sikh Council UK, CasteWatch UK and the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance.

ii) International reach in the community through media, public lectures, and community meetings: Dhanda was interviewed by a New Delhi-based research group on 14/04/2013 (see 5d), and her research was cited in 2013 in a Danish newspaper, *Kristeligt Dagblad* (<http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/509838:Udland--Storbritannien-vil-kastesystemet-til-livs>). She was interviewed live by BBC Radio 4 on 16/04/2013 and Sher-e-Punjab radio (Canada) on 17/05/2013. She lectured to over 100 students at the Sanghol Educational Institute (established by the House of Lords peer D. S. Rana, in his ancestral village Sanghol, India) on 'Challenging Caste Prejudice' (04/10/2010), addressed a public meeting in a school in Navanshahr (12/2011) and a public gathering of over 50,000 *dalits* on 31/12/2011 in Amritsar, India (see 5h, 5.j).

iii) Informing debates amongst activists/academics internationally: Dhanda's invited lectures at international meetings of academics and activists at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (11/2011); Center for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi (01/2012); SOAS, University of London (06/2012); Uppsala University (11/2012); University of Leiden (12/2012); Punjab University (01/2013); and Jawaharlal Nehru University (01/2013), have changed the public discourse regarding caste in Britain, hitherto considered a non-issue, bringing it to the notice of scholars and activists internationally.

iv) Mentoring new researchers internationally: Dhanda's Leverhulme Research project *Caste Aside* (see Reference 6) has provided the added benefit of mentoring two *Dalit* postgraduates in India through the research process (see letters 5f and 5g).

b) On Gender and South Asian diasporic experience

Dhanda's work on gender quotas (2000, see 2.b above) was widely cited and discussed. Her edited book *Reservations for Women* (Reference 1), the first ever collection on the topic of gender quotas and a part of an important series on 'Issues in Indian Feminism', has sold out (600 copies) and is in libraries (44, according to Google Scholar, with a majority in USA) and is on reading lists on courses world-wide.

Dhanda's research on gender more generally led to public engagement through interviews on radio – *Beacon* and *The Wolf* (Wolverhampton area), *BBC West Midlands* and *LBC* (London) – on the issue of women 'veiling'; to an invited lecture on Feminism and Philosophy to an audience of 100 at the oldest women's college in Punjab; as a panellist on BBC3 *Night Waves* live radio discussion on 'Feminism' on 12/04/2012; and on 'Prime Debate' on *Day and Night TV* (Chandigarh) on 29/12/2012, a live broadcast following the death of a gang rape victim in Delhi. She was also a live radio discussant on Feminist Philosophy (*Philosophy Now* radio show #14 on 01/11/2011) on the London arts radio station, *Resonance104.4FM*.

Reference 3 contributed to a six-country project on 'Honour' and Women's rights, a collaboration between an established women's NGO in India and International Development

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Research Centre, Canada, the results of which are disseminated world-wide, informing discourse on killing in the name of 'honour'.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- a) **Support for lobbying** (Section 4.a.i) Dhanda was consulted by a researcher in the House of Lords Library Research Services on behalf of Peers in connection with the debate in the UK Parliament to make 'caste' an aspect of 'race'. Copy of emails from Dorothy Hughes (Library Clerk, Research Services, House of Lords Library: hughesd@parliament.uk, 11 & 15/04/2013).
- b) **Community reach** (Section 4.a.i): Invited as academic expert for discussion on 'Caste Discrimination' on the show *Real Talk* hosted by Apache Indian on *BRITASIA TV*, SKY 833, Part 1 aired on 21/02/2013, Part 2, on 28/02/2013. Dhanda's appearance is at minutes 18:34 - 24:42; 30:15 - 31:22; 1:17:15-1:21:09. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8OsHyZ7mo&feature=youtu.be>
- c) **Community reach** (Section 4.a.i): Panellist on a community TV (*Kanshi TV*) discussion to support the activation of the law, on the eve of a historic debate in the House of Commons for a law to tackle caste discrimination (15/04/2013). <http://www.kanshitv.co.uk/content/evening-show-15042013>
- d) **International reach:** (Section 4.a.ii): Interviewed by Vinod Sartape of *Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism* based in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi 14/04/2013. <http://www.grfdt.com/InterviewDetails.aspx?TabId=16>
- e) **Value to stakeholders:** (section 4.a.i): Letters of recommendation from Davinder Prasad, General Secretary of CasteWatch UK, a lobbying group against caste discrimination (more than one, latest 04/05/2013).
- f) **Mentoring stakeholders:** (Section 4.a.iv): Letter of recommendation from *Dalit* Research Assistant, Mr Kirpal Hira (MPhil Research Fellow, Punjab University, India) (Original in Punjabi, with English translation)
- g) **Mentoring stakeholders:** (Section 4.a.iv): Letter of recommendation from an activist of ADHAS (Aadi Dharam Samaj, see <http://aadhasbharat.com/about-us.php>), Ms Surekha Sujata (PhD Scholar, Delhi University) (Original in Hindi, with English translation)
- h) **International reach:** (Section 4.a.ii): Letter from Darshan Rattan Raavan, the leader of ADHAS, Ludhiana, India.
- i) **Significance of research:** (Section 2.a) Letter from the award manager, Anna Grundy, from The Leverhulme Trust, praising Dhanda's outputs and their reach beyond academia.
- j) **International reach:** (Section 4.a.ii) Photos of addressing public rallies.