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DEPARTMENT OF  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND HISTORY

# Narrations

Reflections from Oral History



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

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Oral history as defined by the Oral History Association is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.

Donald A Ritchie in his book, “Doing Oral History” mentions, “Oral History collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews. An oral history interview generally consists of a well-prepared interviewer questioning an interviewee and recording their exchange in audio or video format. Recordings of the interview are transcribed, summarized, or indexed and then placed in a library or archives. These interviews may be used for research or excerpted in a publication, radio or video documentary, museum exhibition, dramatization or other form of public presentation. Recordings, transcripts, catalogs, photographs and related documentary materials can also be posted on the Internet. Oral history does not include random taping, such as President Richard Nixon’s surreptitious recording of his White House conversations, nor does it refer to recorded speeches, wiretapping, personal diaries on tape, or other sound recordings that lack the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee.”

Oral history has had a significant impact upon historical practice in the second half of the twentieth century. It has democratized the study of the past by recording the experience of people who have not been considered to be a part of history. Historians and students of History have a wide number of primary sources to base their research or studies on, where Oral History can become a part of such sources. It has several unique benefits that other historical source might not provide.

It assists in learning about individuals who might not otherwise appear in the historical record. It allows you to compensate for the digital age. It helps in finding different kinds of information about an event or story. It provides historical actors with an opportunity to tell their own stories in their own words. It provides a rich opportunity for human interaction while trying to document an event or story of historical significance.

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presentation. Recordings, transcripts, catalogs, photographs and related documentary materials can also be posted on the Internet. To avoid repeating common mistakes, oral historians have created standards for doing interviews, and established principles for dealing ethically with their interviewees. But oral history is too dynamic and creative a field to be entirely captured by any single definition. For every rule, an exception has worked. Imaginative interviewers are constantly developing and sharing new methods and uses of oral history. Any definition of the oral history process, or any method of interviewing, must reflect the goals of the specific project, the resources available, and other practical considerations.

The whole process of documenting an event or story of historical significance is conducted through an interview. Before conducting an interview, one must be prepared with the background research of the interviewee; one must also conceptualize their research as well as prepare an interview guide. It can either be recorded as an audio or as a video depending upon the funding received by an Oral History researcher. After the interview has been recorded, it gets transcribed as a dialogue between the Interviewer and the Interviewee. This transcription is then sent to the interviewee for their consent after which it gets documented in the archives. These Oral History interviews can be archived in three ways: a) Thematic organizing b) Tags and Annotations c) Transcripts and summaries.

Diverse cultures depend on storytelling to pass along knowledge and understanding. Folklorists find that tales passed down as family lore or community legends have

value as much for their form as for their content. In those cases where storytelling takes place without an interviewer who can pursue issues raised in the stories by questioning the narrator does not fit the standard definition of oral history but its study illuminates some significant issues facing oral historians. A Storyteller's aim is not so much to preserve a permanent record as to inform and influence their immediate audience. Storyteller usually controls the performance, the particular setting and audience can affect the story's presentation. Telling a story in a new setting, to a new audience creates new meanings. Storytelling reminds us that all oral presentations involve a degree of performance, and that the audience can affect that performance. Stories told in an interview often involve a re-telling of something the interviewee heard from someone else or has previously told to others. The interviewer can affect in subtle or even striking ways the content of the story. Some sensitivity to the nature of storytelling is therefore essential to the management of oral history collections.

Oral historians and folklorists both use interviews to collect information - but not necessarily the same type of information. Oral historians concentrate on recording the personal experiences of the interviewee whereas folklorists collect the traditional stories, songs and other expressions of the community, fact or fiction. An oral historian would most likely interview a husband and wife separately seeking to identify the unique perspective of each spouse. A folklorist being as interested in the way a story is told as in its substance would interview the couple together to observe the interplay as one begins a story and the other finishes it. As Barbara Allen

puts it, historians "tend to see oral historical sources as mines of raw data from which historical evidence can be extracted," folklorists are more concerned with "recognizing identifiable patterns" in the way people shape their narrative.

Some of the famous Oral History practitioners are, Linda Shopes, Donald A Ritchie, Robert Perks, Alessandro Portelli, Urvashi Bhutalia, Dr.Indira Chowdhury, Katherine Borland and Shahid Amin. Oral History Association has been associated with a number of works done by these Oral Historians. Oral history has also been documented on the web through websites like Story Corps, Project BOLO and Roots and Recipes.

Christ University, Department of International Studies and History have been

conducting Value added courses as a bridge course for the papers being offered to their Undergraduate students in History from January 2015. Various papers have been taught under this course, like Greek History, Roman History, Explorations and Excavations, etc. Oral History as a paper under this course was thought to be an apt paper to be offered to the students. Since it would help the students of History to understand the subjectivity involved in the discipline of history. This course was conducted between June- July 2016 and as a part of their partial fulfillment of the course, the students were supposed to conduct interviews. The essays found in this book are few of those transcribed and summarized interviews interpreted by the students for their understanding of the subject.

## **Indian Soldiers in the Korean War**

**Agraj Parashar**

**T**he Korean War which was fought from 25 June 1950- 27 July 1953 started when North Korea invaded South Korea. Hence, USA and the UN came to the aid of South Korea whereas the North Koreans were helped by China and Russia. This took place after Korea was divided at the end of the World War II and the tensions of Cold war were witnessed across the globe.

The UN had declared 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as the line dividing these two countries, where most of the war was fought within and across both sides of the line.

One Indian unit under the UN was also sent for this war called as 60 Parachute field ambulance from the Indian army under the leadership of the then CO Col AG Rangaraj. The 60 Parachute Field Ambulance served in Korea for a total of three and a half years (Nov 1950- May 1954), the longest single tenure by any military unit under the UN flag. The highlight of the tenure undoubtedly was when the unit provided an ADS and a surgical team (7 officers and 5 Other ranks) during Operation Tomahawk, an airborne operation launched on 21 March 1951 by the US Army's 187 Airborne Regimental Combat Team.

Lt. Col AS Parashar, my grandfather, was a part of this unit and attended this war. Since childhood we have heard a lot of stories from him regarding this war and numerous other wars he had fought. I have had the privilege of attending the re-unions of this

unit held in Agra or Bangalore every 4 years. Having a keen interest in photography since young age, Lt Col AS Parashar has clicked many photographs of the war and the situation in Korea. These photographs have also documented the mass destruction which had taken place during the war. He has developed those photographs himself making it a self made treasure as an album. During the interview he spoke about his experience as a young commissioned soldier of the Indian army and his feelings about staying away from the family for three and a half years.

Lt Col AS Parashar's family had moved into India (Himachal Pradesh) from Lahore after partition. Being the eldest son in the family, it was now his responsibility to look after them in the unsettling situation created by the partition. Hence, joined the armed forces in India and was immediately sent to Korea for three and a half years. The only point of contact between them was through the letters that his family wrote to him. He looked after the family by sending most part of his salary to them.

Being in the medical division his units job was to treat the patients, but the young him wanted to see the actual frontline; as he has said in the interview he asks his CO to let him go witness it. His CO gives him the permission and it turns out to be one hell of an experience as the vehicle he was travelling in was stuck between artillery shelling from both sides. As we see in the movies close calls of artillery shells falling right and left of the vehicle, he experienced it for real. This was one of the many close encounters he faced. On the sad note, he lost many friends in the war who were martyred, and a lot of sad bloody memory

of the war is still very fresh to him even though he is 84 years.

My experience during the entire interview was exhilarating as well as eye opening to what actually happens in a war. Especially back in those days when the equipment and clothing provided to soldiers was merely anything. Also a firsthand experience of a soldier from the Indian army just after partition is very interesting as India had just been liberated and under Nehru we were already taking part in such events. Also how does it feel to be fighting for someone else war under the UN flag; as soldiers of democracy. Very interesting to know what happened during the initial stages of the cold war.

The problems I faced during the interview were very limited and being a fauji, even at this age he surprised me with his amazing memory. Remembering the names of railway stations, rivers etc. Only issue was his hearing problem which at 84 is unavoidable and the interview had to be paced very slowly and carefully. He would often get excited about this whole experience and was delighted to be interviewed on his favourite topic by his very own grandchild.

I learnt a lot from this interview, how the army under the UN operates, where do they get instructions from, they have to fight not only with their countrymen but with soldiers from nations across the globe under a common blue UN flag. Being a history student and an army aspirant who wants to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation from the family to join the forces, such tales run are very close to me and also help me mould myself for the future. JAI HIND!

## Oral History

### Amal

*“The values transmitted through oral history are many - courage, selflessness, the ability to endure, and to do so with humor and grace. I got those values listening to my dad's stories about the Depression and how their family survived. It gave me courage that I, too, could survive hard times.”*

- Ann Turner

**H**istory is a known branch of study. While it may face a lot of mixed reactions, ranging from total boredom to extreme interest, it is a known entity. In short, expectations are few. However Oral History was more of a vague area of study and on introduction, seemed much more impossible to study and understand than at the first glance.

Oral History is, according to definition, “the collection and study of historical information using tape recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events.” Among the most notable of these early efforts to collect oral accounts of the past are the thousands of life histories recorded by Federal Writers Project [FWP] workers during the late 1930s and early 1940s. An agency of the New Deal Works Progress Administration, the FWP was deeply populist in intent and orientation; the life histories were designed to document the diversity of the American experience and ways ordinary people were coping with the hardships of the Great Depression. Thus, historians generally consider oral history as beginning with the work of Allan Nevins at Columbia

University in the 1940s. Nevins was the first to initiate a systematic and disciplined effort to record on tape, preserve, and make available for future research recollections deemed of historical significance.

Oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the conversation takes the form of an interview, in which one person - the interviewer - asks questions of another person - variously referred to as the interviewee or narrator - oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue. The questions of the interviewer, deriving from a particular frame of reference or historical interest, elicit certain responses from the narrator, deriving from that person's frame of reference, that person's sense of what is important or what he or she thinks is important to tell the interviewer. To quote Alessandro Portelli, one of oral history's most thoughtful practitioners, "Oral history refers [to] what the source and the historian do together at the moment of their encounter in the interview."

In the beginning, the lessons seemed tough and the rules too many. Instructions were given and strict following of certain guidelines was expected. It all seemed too much of procedure and too less of content. Gradually, we were eased into mock interviews and given a chance to include the rules and regulations in our daily practices. Practice makes perfect, so they say. Practice indeed made perfect and practice also made it easy to remember the thousand rules and the millions of do's and don't's. We were instructed on various informal rules to be followed, like the

manner in which we had to deal with the interviewee; the way to talk, the way to sit, how to deal with certain long pauses and general behavior. Another important aspect is to let the interviewee know about every single step taken in the process of

Then came the tricky part of taking the actual interview, which would be marked on the basis of the style in which it is conducted, the aptness of the topic taken and the manner of conduction. My interviewee was a teacher of mine and we discussed on the topic 'How Indians are treated globally' where I asked her to narrate her experiences or the potentially racist approaches she might have been subjected to while she travelled abroad. We were able to engage in a very informative and interactive interview which included my questions that sometimes went out of schedule due to mere curiosity and her apt answers. Difficulties, as usual, were anticipated. Preparing for the interview was the first major difficult step because you had to prepare questions that would allow you to know as much as possible pertaining to the topic and information related that could help in your research without being at a risk of insulting the interviewee, or at worst, asking them questions they wouldn't want to answer.

Transcribing of the interview took longer than expected as we had to convert each and every sound and disturbance to the written word. We also were expected to submit in a few documents like the gift deed form expressing the willingness of the interviewee to submit the recording to the interviewer, the questionnaire that should include all the questions asked to the interviewee, the original transcription and a biographical form indicating the details of

the interviewee. Marks were placed and comments offered on the possible wrongs and the rights were appreciated. The best interviews had a measured, thinking-out-loud quality, as perceptive questions work a particular topic, encouraging the narrator to remember details, seeking to clarify that which is muddled, making connections among disconnected recollections, challenging contradictions, evoking assessments of what it all meant then and what it means now. The best interviewers listen carefully between the lines of what is said for what the narrator is trying to get at and then have the courage to ask the hard questions.

All this culminated into a test that tested our knowledge of the aspects that are important concerning Oral History. It tested the various areas of knowledge we could have gained from. Altogether, it was a learning experience.

## **Political Insight into Tamil Nadu**

**Lakshmi Karlekar**

*“Every time an old man dies, it is as if a library of history is burning down.”*

*- African Proverb*

**O**ral history is a very vital source for the collection of memories of the past events. Oral history are stories that individuals narrate about their past or about the past of other people. If one had to be a genealogist or family historian, they need to generate information from the old members of the family to preserve

family tradition or interview a subject of the society who was impacted by the event. Oral History must be transcribed and preserved in libraries for future use. The interview can range from miners, cowboys, early settlers, industrial traders, politicians, doctors, neighbours, family acquaintance members etc. Oral history is a primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words of a person through the recording device. It helps in defining history on the use of memories and autobiographies, on records of individual recollection of past events. Due to all these importance given to Oral History, it is now considered as an integrated discipline of Archaeology. As a student of Oral History Certificate Course I conducted an interview with Mr. Doraiswamy, a retired Principal of TELC Tiruchinapalli High School and also a graduate in History.

Our topic for discussion was an Insight into the Historical and Political aspects of Tamil Nadu. I as an interviewer had a goal to extract a lot of perspectives and information from the interviewee which would give me a wide insight into the past of Tamil Nadu. Since Oral History is a collection and study of historical information for which I had to be specific and formal during the interview process.

The most important step in incorporation of any Oral History data is the reason for its inclusion. The primary goal of my project is both achievable and worthwhile. This is because in future that is maybe centuries down the lane the oral history audio which is been compiled by the present generation will have a value far beyond than what it has today. While I was choosing Oral History data I, included place, name, data and personal life histories to personal

memories of events associated to that locale. Once a project has been selected and the goal is pursued in a refined manner, then I decided to choose a knowledgeable person who would be my interviewee.

The interview was conducted on 29.06.16 at Mr. Doraiswamy residence. Mr. Doraiswamy began the interview by speaking about his life and family background. The historical information that Mr. Doraiswamy had provided had a lot of place names which indicated the occupation, language territory, population, resource use, trail systems, transportation routes, beliefs, general economy of Tamil Nadu. As we see from time immemorial, we have been witnessing the rules of clans, kings, colonies in the history of India. But during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it had a drastic change in the political system which now followed the principles of democracy, liberty, secularism.

The interviewee also mentioned about the role of politics in Tamil Nadu which evolved by the National Party Congress coming to power (called as Madras State). Followed by which was the DMK party headed by Mr. C M Annadurai. While extracting more history regarding the event, I questioned the interviewee as to how the political scenario has changed in the present times for which he explained that the thirst of power between the DMK and AIADMK which were now headed by Karunanidhi and Jayalalitha. The interviewee also mentioned that there was a split of AIADMK from DMK due to ideological difference. Ever since then these political parties are ruling the state alternatively for four decades.

I was eager to know the facilities given by the parties and their main motive was welfare of the state for which they provided TV, rice at a cheaper rate for the ration card holders which uplifted their social status. To make Tamil Nadu a more literate state they provided free books, free uniforms and free cycles to build skills. To enhance the education, appropriate infrastructure was also been constructed. There is a also a bonus given to people especially during festivals during Deepawali and Pongal. Both parties: DMK and AIADMK give Pongal gift to the government employees such as departments of transport, electrical, co-operative society employees. The bonus depends on the percentage of their salary. IAS, IPS, B and A grade employees usually get a minimum of five thousand rupees as Pongal gift which is very beneficial. The C and D class employees get a maximum of three thousand five hundred rupees as Pongal gift. Jayalalitha, the Iron lady of AIADMK party is giving much priority to girls and offering them with a gold sovereign thali. Thus we see an immense role of Amma in Tamil Nadu. Throwing light on the historical aspects of Tamil Nadu we see that it has a rich historical heritage such as temples and churches built by famous dynasties.

The interviewee spoke about the marvellous architecture prevalent in Madurai known as Shree Meenakshi Temple, Shree Valliputtur, Andal Temple, the Kumbakonnam Temple at Tirunamalai, Brihadeshwara temple built by Cholas at Tanjore which has the biggest shikara in the entire India. Speaking of the glory of the Meenakshi Temple, it is also called as Meenakshi Sundareshwara Temple as Lord Sundareshwara is the husband of Goddess Meenakshi. This temple was built during

the period of Pandyas and completed during the period of Nayakas. The temple possessing a rich heritage has a sanctum sanctorium, balipeetham, inner and outer pradakshina patha, shikara all built in the Dravidian style of architecture which is seen only in the South Indian temples. Other temples also follow the Vesara style of architecture which is a mixture of Nagara style of architecture (North India) and Dravidian style of architecture (South India). The temple has six gopurams in total where four are very high and half a kilometre in breadth. The gopuram present on the eastern side is the main entrance to this divine place. All over the world tourist arrive to see this marvellous piece of architecture.

The widely celebrated festival is the Chitra festival in the month of April. The story behind the reason to celebrate this festival is that when Goddess Meenakshi got married to Lord Sundereshwara, the brother of Goddess Meenakshi who was invited was angered that without his presence the marriage took place. At once he left back to Alagan Koyal, a village. This is the main reason this festival is celebrated in a grand scale in Tamil Nadu. The renowned churches in Tamil Nadu are Velangini, St Thomas Mount, Vadipatti church, Holy Reedemers Church at Madhurai. All these masterpieces are been preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. The Velangini church is situated on the seashore and here people worship Jesus, Mother Mary, Father Joseph and his 12 disciples. There is a belief that when the disciples come and worship here they get relieved from their bindings. For this structure to be moulded into a masterpiece, a very significant story is there that Mary appeared in the dream of a milk man who in turn told

it to the public and thus they began to construct a church to worship Mary. Velangini is fondly known as “*Lourdes of the East*”.

Millions of pilgrims visit this shrine throughout the year, praying to Our Lady for various needs and thanking her for the favours received. The interviewee also gave cultural information regarding the heroic fight with the bulls called as Jallikattu which was recently banned in the Supreme Court. This game was played not to harass any animal but to prove their heroism. Jallikattu originated from the Tamil words jalli and kattu meaning silver and gold coins tied to the bulls horns. This event is conducted as a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day. A temple bull is like the head of all cattle in a village and special rituals are performed for this temple bull during important days. This game has been practiced during the Tamil classical period. It is seen that in the region of Mullai, the geographical division of ancient Tamil country where ancient tribes resided this game was common among them.

A strong point in the interviewee was that despite his old age he could remember the chronological order of the events that have taken place in Tamil Nadu and gave an elaborate material regarding the historical, political and cultural events of Tamil Nadu. We see fallibility of human memory is short term and long term and memories starts with initial perceptions, inspite of these difficulties, the interviewee spoke extremely well. To pass on the knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures from generation to generation storytelling is necessary to enhance our perception about the event. My perspective during the interview was to help me gain ample first

hand information witnessed by the interviewee. In the interview, I was able to capture his everyday perspectives, unique life experience, speech patterns, use of language and contemporary mannerism.

The course gave me an insight of memory, nostalgia and how to conduct a formal interview. The classes conducted helped me learn more about history. Appropriate power point presentations and videos relating to Oral History topics gave me a broader perspective about the scope of Oral History. It is seen that we can learn different kinds of information from Oral History Interview.

Although documents can reveal a lot of information about an individual, it may or may not contain the required information a historian would likely seek for. Here I see that through the interview, it has helped me question the individual on the area of interest and the questions he would like to answer with his input. While creating Oral history data, I was sure to take time to prepare for the interview and decide on the most important questions I would like to ask for. Oral History has been easy and interesting way of achieving knowledge. It can help gather a lot of views about any incident reliably. Through the interview, I have been able to gather a lot of data regarding the historical, political, cultural aspects of Tamil Nadu. Overall during this course, the facilitator has moulded me into being a better interviewer.

## **History of a Missionary/ Convent Nun**

**M. Kalyani**

**A**s Patricia Leavy said “*Oral history is a research method. It is a way of conducting long, highly detailed interviews with people about their life experiences, often in multiple interview sessions. Oral history allows the person being interviewed to use their own language to talk about events in their life and the method is used by researchers in different fields like history, anthropology and sociology*”.

So, under this course we were given a CIA in which we had to interview a person about his/her history of life or experiences. So, my interview was with a convent nun who is an ex-christite and her name is sister Bincy. I had taken my interview on 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 in the visitors’ room of PG Savina Bhavan. Sister Bincy was born and brought up in Kaladi, Kerala. She lives in Kerala but she was in Bangalore for few weeks in our PG because she needed a letter from Christ University as she studied her undergraduate in this University.

So, while she studied in Christ University she used to stay in this PG i.e. Savina Bhavan. After doing UG from Christ University she did her B.Ed. in Kerala. Now she is doing MSc (Psychology) in Sanskrit University, Kaladi. She was born at Chirpura in the Kannur district of Kerala. Her mother tongue is Malayalam. The place where she lived was not a town or a city but it was a village. She studied in a management or a catholic school and she joined convent after studying her 10<sup>th</sup> class. She has one sister and a brother. Her brother is working here in Bangalore. Her sister got married and was working in Dubai. She is not related with some PG like the warden sisters in my hostel are associated with Savina Bhavan for a long-long time.

And then she tells about the initiation of this PG, she thought that it was started in 1997 and it was started by one of the major superiors. This PG was started when sister Bincy had just joined convent in Kerala. Blessed Savina is the founder of this congregation. Blessed Savina is an Italian Sister who started there and then the sisters came to India as Missionary and then enhanced the convent in India. Sister Bincy tells that her transition from being a girl to sister was great.

As mentioned earlier she joined the convent after her 10<sup>th</sup> class, because during her high school she wanted to become a missionary and that gave her the inspiration to join this missionary congregation as then she would get a chance to work in the mission centres in North India. It was her dream to work for others and to teach poor students.

As there are many barriers or problems faced by a person in his/her life, sister tells that there were many problems in her life too but at last she got solutions. She also tells how people used to tell her their problems like family, economic or problems of their children and these sisters in the missionary used to solve their problems. Then she says that we should not confine ourselves to the problems but we should overcome it. We should have faith in ourselves and God will help us find out the solutions.

Many people got depressed because of their problems so these sisters would give them courage and tell them how other people are facing more severe problems than them. When these sisters listened to their problems so they are like Oh! At least there is someone who is listening to my problems or someone understands my problems.

Sister Bincy recollects that when she used to study many girls had personal problems so she used suggest them ways to overcome them. She tells that nowadays students face many physical, social and personal problems and they need some support and they want someone to listen to them so that they also feel motivated. She says we should not give much importance to these problems and we should see everything in the perspective of faith. Many a times we think our problems is like a mountain but it's not true.

Now, when sister Bincy decided to become a missionary of course like any other parents even her parents had an objection with it. But she was determined that she wanted to be a missionary and serve people. She narrates that even her parents were very pious and they have great faith in God and in her place to become a nun is considered a grace of God or a special call. So it was not that tough to be a missionary but still her parents were sad because one member of the family was going out. They can't go home anytime when they feel like because they have their own set of rules in the convent. They can go home only at a particular time when there is a vacation. Her family also called her back as she could have had a good life, she could have studied further, had a good job and also get married. But, deep inside she had a desire to become a missionary. As, she was attracted to being a missionary so much that even if she was called by her parents to come home, her heart urged her to stay back. Interestingly enough, she told me that before becoming a nun they had to undergo preparation for some years which is referred to as 'formation period'. During that time they can take decisions. By just going to convent for one week or by one month they will not

become a nun. They have their own formation period and then there is time to think for if they want to continue this life or not.

After becoming a missionary also they have time to think if they want to continue with this life. After becoming a missionary they have five to ten years to think again because at the first place they are taking the vows and for nine consecutive years, each year they are given time to think as each year they have to renew their vows. They are given this chance because after getting into this life only they will understand whether they can live this life or not. So, if they cannot continue they can go back to their normal life. So, there is a possibility to depart.

She visited Bangalore almost after two-three years and she could see the change in the city this time compared to her last visit. She says there were not so many buildings, the number of PGs and hostels have also increased manifold. Traffic of Bangalore is growing day by day and life here is getting more difficult. She says some changes are welcoming whereas some are not. As many people are coming here from outside, the local people accept them very well and though the local people may not identify the changes but people coming from outside who have already lived here once can easily recognize the changes happening in the city.

Now, at the end Sister Bincy gives a very good message. She talks about the changing attitude of the youth and then she says the changes are sometimes good as the only thing permanent in this world is change and we should accept them but still we should give importance to the values,

moralties that have always remained ingrained in our society since time immemorial.

As an ex-student of Christ she says that Christites have changed a lot, now people don't have time to think about themselves and where they are going in life. They just follow what others are doing. Students are always trying to catch up with everything in life but they do not really know what they want from life. Whatever we do it should add some meaning to our life. So, we should ask ourselves - what is good for my life? What will add values and morals to my life?

As I was interviewing a catholic nun, at first it was difficult for me because as an interviewer I had many barriers. At first she didn't agree to give me the interview but then I convinced her that the interview will be authentic and showed her the gift deed form and then she became a little comfortable with me taking her interview. And she told me to show the questionnaire and then we started the interview. After a few minutes of the interview she was very comfortable and she responded to each and every question asked by me in detail. It was really interesting knowing about the life experiences of a nun. As I am from a non-Christian background I got to know many things about the life of nuns and the rules and regulations they have in their convent. How they overcome the barrier they face while going out of the family or becoming a nun. How they give so much to the society in many ways by caring for poor patients in the hospital or by teaching poor students in the schools. They give more than what they take from the society. Sister Bincy is one such example. Their heart and soul lies in working towards the betterment of the

society. There are barriers when they aspire to become a nun or a father because each and everyone tries to stop them saying that they could have a better life, they can get married and have children but at the end of the day they follow their heart.

Now, when I look at this course through the learning perspective, I learnt a lot about the documentation of history, how a narrative or an interview can turn into a history by just documenting it. It is notion that history belongs to elite people only but it is not so because we as a commoners can also create history. History is not always about past because if we record the present happenings then at one point of time in the future it will become past.

So, my experience with this course was very different as I got to learn about a new field in history about which I previously had little idea. I got to know the formal way of interviewing a person, how to do videotaping and most importantly I developed the art of being sensible to others' emotions. Now I know the link between memory and oral history. As, how one person goes down his/her memory lane and narrates the thing he remembers properly and he/she narrates with their own perspective or how they looked at the particular event. And the teaching method was also very interesting as many PPTs were shown to us in the class and the information was explained to us detail. As we used to see PPTs, those visual pictures and videos made an impact and helped in learning the subject more visually.

As Studs Terkel quoted "*I'm called an oral historian which is something of a joke. Oral history was here long before the pen, long before Gutenberg and the printing press.*

*The difference is I have a tape recorder in my hand".*

The point which Studs Terkel wants to make is that oral history in its raw form was always there like in the form of folklore or narration of stories etc. But it took a more formal form with the documentation of these narrations which we call Oral History.

## **1970's in Bukkararaya Samudram: An Exclusive Interview**

**Nymisha Yadati**

**I**n rural India in the decade of 1970 there took place transformation in many spheres. This project was undertaken as a CIA in the course of oral history. It is an attempt to bring out a view on a village called Bukkararayasamudram in Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh. I have dealt with the issues of cultural transformation, changing role of women in the society, and political transformation. For this interview we had to select an appropriate interviewee who could give us relevant information on the topic of research. I choose a resident of the village who experienced the changes in 1970's, her name is Mrs. Kalavathamma Yadati she has served as the president of the village women organization locally called Mahila Mandal and was also a member of the Gram Panchayat.

The interview started with introductory questions and slowly moved to the core questions. The interviewee elaborately spoke about the village history. The village

was under king Bukkaraya of Vijayanagara Empire. There was a huge water tank built by the king. The name of the tank was Chinnamadevi. At present it is dried due to lack of rains and mining of sand. She reminisces the journey from Ananthapur to Bukkarayasamudram. She tells the entire region was covered with green fields. They had to pass through a place called Mussamma katta . The interviewee narrated a story in this regard. Musamma was the daughter in law of the prosperous Reddy family. This incident happened long before when the entire region was drought stricken.

She tells someone had rumored that a pregnant woman had to sacrifice herself and fall in the tank this would please the gods and the rain would descend. And she gave her life at midnight, this lady jumped in the tank. Unexpectedly it started raining profusely the next day this led to flood like situation in the village. Since then people of the village have built a worshipping place for her and it is called Musallama katta since then. She also came to be known as the local deity. However interviewee was not sure about the time period when the incident occurred and other specific details.

When questioned on the village politics she gave detailed explanation of gram panchayat. She spoke about the disputes of the village which were solved by the members of Panchayat. There existed a 12 member committee among whom 6 were men and other 6 were women. The interviewee herself was a member of the committee. The village was divided into wards where each ward was appointed with one representative who was assigned the duty of development. It was made sure

there happens holistic development of the village.

She mentions about the changes that she tried to bring in the village. She tried to bring together the women of the village, irrespective of their caste and religion under an institution called Mahila Mandali. The institution was named Sri Padmavati Mahila Samastha.

When questioned on the festivities of the village, the interviewee gave detailed information on Jatara and Pir, which are local festivals of the village. Jatra a fair was celebrated once in 12 years. People offered a share of their produce to the god. People offered hens, cattle's, goats, cows etc. The festival started formally by a Bhoomi pooja performed by Brahmins. After they return the lower caste people would sacrifice the animals. That was very brutal in nature. The blood over flooded the drains. The interviewee has witnessed this incident.

She talks about the festival called Pir where the Brahmin men visited Masjid. In those days Brahmins were given importance. Harijans were not allowed in temples. In the Brahmin colony the Harijans were prohibited. But later all these practices came to an end. She spoke about a temple called Vekateshwara swamy konda. An important festival associated with Vekateshwara swamy is Teru . Every year the main idol of the temple is brought down in the village for procession in Maga season on full moon day. At this juncture I faced a problem, the interviewee was deviating from the questions . So I had to bring her back to the track.

Emergence of political parties in local politics brought development , along with it

they became reason for fragmentation of the society. Political parties actively started playing role in village politics. RSS entered the village they trained the youth of the village they were given lessons on exercise, rationality self assessment, and unity. They generated awareness on working of political system. RSS was followed by Congress, Telugu Desam and BJP. She also mentions political parties exploited the villagers. The supporters of different Parties clashed with each other. These parties bribed the poor and earned their support.

In the end she concluded by talking about the infrastructure of the village .She spoke about many institutions established then like state bank, government hospital, and rice factories, textile factories etc. The village was transformed into a small scale town with all the facilities available and accessible.

It was a memorable experience. This project helped me to bring out the dynamics of a village in 1970's. However this interview exclusively focuses on one person's perspective. This project has helped to document human memory.

## **Life of a Zamindar in Fatehpur, 1920's - An Exclusive Interview**

**Prateeti Srinivasan**

**H**istory is just a collection various events happened in past. It is the knowledge that tells about what occurred in past that have build present in which we are living. Oral history is one of

the major branch of history that not only provide the various perspective of same event but it sometimes reveal various untold stories that might alter our present. "Don't forget- No one else sees the world in the way you do, so no one else can tell the stories that you know" said by Charles de Lint. Thus every story and perspective carries its own importance.

Any concept becomes interesting when you have practical on it. I too got a chance. The topic I selected to know more about was "Life of zamindars in fatehpur during 1920's". My interviewed focus more on the social life of zamindar of Fatehpur district of Uttar Pradesh because when we studies various text the maximum we learn about Zamindars were the various policy that they had followed under Britisher. But the history had totally ignored social life of zamindars. And according to me to learn about social life of zamindar is very necessary as zamindar somewhere in past was one of the important authority and being an authority must have influenced mass not only economically but also socially somewhere, thus one can't ignore their social life. The person I interviewed was Lakshmeshwari Srivastava, who was the granddaughter of Kanta Prasad, zamindar of Fatehpur District. I interviewed her because she herself lived a life as zamindar for some time period and can give us deeper information of day to day life of a zamindar than any text. And second reason to interview her was that, earlier the history was noted generally from men view and from this interview one can get perspective of female as well.

Through this interview I not only come to know the various names of zamindars that got lost somewhere in time but I also got

little bit idea of Indian society during 1930's. It also increased some history related to Fatehpur district, about which internet also does not have much data. My interviewee talked about the idea of joint family, she talked about the role of women in the family as well as the role of men, education that was provided to them, status of female in society in comparison to male, the dressing style during 1920's, re-marriage, lavish life of zamindar and the food and crimes in her region.

She told that during those days, the idea of joint family was very normal as when I asked her, how many members were there in your family. She replied, "I lived nearly with fifty (50) members". She also told that zamindari in her family was handled by her three grandfather that symbolises unity and gives us the idea that earlier in indian society there were certain families who did not fought with each other in greed of power and land. Other thing she told in her interview was that the idea of female status in the society in comparison to male. according to her there was no discrimination that was faced by anyone in the society. But if we hear te interview there are certain things that shows us that there was little discrimination like- she was being sent to school till 8th standard and had done high school privately in english medium whereas male were allowed to study further more. She also talked about various subjects that were taught to girls exclusively for their future life. Like- household work, sewing , stitching and weaving. Although the education system was influenced by britisher as everything was taught in english but the Indian tradition also had its influence. She also told that age of marriage for girls was 16 to 17 years old whereas boys were married at

age of 19 or 20 years but the girls were not allowed to re-marry but men were allowed to marry again if the wife was dead. Apart from this she even talked about lavish life that she had before her marriage. She described that "there was good arrangement of food, there were many cows, milk was in abundance, five to six servants were there and as there was no electricity during those times so servants used to pull hand fans." Apart from this her father used to play badminton and cricket which were counted as a high society games during those times. She also described her place ,that there was a big maidan which had well and temple and there was separate place for guest to stay. She also mentioned in the interview that there were many villages under them including huge farms and orchards. And lastly when I asked her about the changes that she observe in the society she talked about food, telling that the food during her childhood used to be highly rich in nutrients whereas now the food had lost its taste and secondly she talks about crimes that is very much prevalent in today's time. She told that earlier men used to look women as human and not as object of desire. They respected women freedom and love them and consider them equal and in return women also love respect and considered men equal. By this she ends the interview leaving me with lots of information and some information that was totally contradictory from my thoughts like educating girls were prevalent whereas I thought girls kept away from schools, marriage of women, etc.

Interviewing her was not at all easy for me because she is partially impaired but after getting so much information about zamindar social life that is not easily available, especially of such an region, I felt

that this much hardship was worth to have. This exercise sometime became tiring but it was fun as well. Inshort I had a very different and nice experience by knowing some different kind of history that no article had covered and that is never being taught to us. Although this interview is totally based on one person's perspective but it had given all new idea about lifestyle of zamindar during 1920's.

## **Interview on Changes in Christ University with Venugopal B. Menon**

**Ratna Mohana**

My interview was with Dr.Venugopal.B Menon about changes in Christ university for past two years. Dr.Venugopal is a professor of International studies and History in Christ University for past two years. The interview was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 which lasted for six minutes. After introducing myself as P.Ratna Mohana, an oral history interviewer who was interested in changes about Christ University during his experience there as a teacher, I asked him to introduce himself. He introduced himself as Venugopal. Then he gave details about his specialization in international studies. He received basic degree in History and Political Science in Layola, Chennai and Masters in contemporary History in JNU. He have been working in Christ University since two years. Prior to Christ University, he worked in M.G University for thirty two years.

As I asked about his feelings at the beginning of his life in Christ University

and about the changes during these years, he replied saying that he had been enjoying teaching in this University. He found increasing facilities in the campus for last two years. There was lot of encouragement to develop the department. When he joined, the department of international studies and History was a part of school of Law. It became an independent department last year. The facilities have extended, especially with regard to books and online data sources. From point of infrastructure, everything new is coming through.

Then I asked him about students. He replied saying that when he started teaching in Christ University two years back, very few students were interested. But when he compared second years to third years second years are more enthusiastic and first years are more enthusiastic than second years.

I asked him about books and online resources. He said he use a lot of books and often encourage students to read and discuss more. Many of the students read and discuss on the basis of what they read. He said that it gives him more pleasure. I asked about changes from department of Law to department of International studies and History. He said that when he and the department was part of school of Law, it was very small. The faculty has expanded from two or three persons at the beginning of new department as International studies and History to ten persons now. Eight of them were from JNU. The subjects under the department are History, Political Science and International studies which are interconnected as well. Though they are under deanery of Law, they are a separate

department. It gives teachers more space to think and do things with autonomy.

I asked about development of infrastructure in the campus. His reply was that development of infrastructure is a continuous process in Christ University. Everyday there is something new. And nothing much can be said about this particular topic. As I said food stalls, he immediately picked up saying that two years back there were less than twenty stalls in Christ whereas now there are more than twenty four stalls as per what he remember.

To conclude I asked his overall opinion about Christ University. He said that academically, it is one of best institutions. It gives opportunity for students as well as teachers to grow. He said that it is definitely a different institution, when compared to others. I asked him if he wanted to share anything else, he said that Christ University is an institution which makes difference in the life of students. The interview was good as Dr.Venugopal B. Menon is our teacher, the communication became very easy. He answered the questions without much distraction from the actual question. I became nervous because I was not able to prepare much for the interview. However, it didn't affect the interview and I was able to get the information which I wanted. I thanked him before leaving the place. It was a good experience from which I got few lessons about how to conduct an oral history interview.

## **Namma Bengaluru**

**Saachi Shukla**

*“It is easy to say that Bangalore is the third largest city and fifth-largest metropolitan in India or that everyone is awe-inspired by its pleasant climate and beauty which are well known facts. However there is much more to Bangalore than this! Though now termed as Bengaluru it means ‘The City of Guards’. Another story originates from Hoysala king Veera Ballala, who when being fed boiled beans called the place ‘Benda-Kaal-Uru (land of boiled beans). Now here are 10 points to prove why Bengaluru is the coolest place to live in...”*

**A**s I was pondering over the various topics which I could select for the Oral History course assignment, I came across this article dealing with the 10 Interesting facts about the ‘Garden City of India’ as being the oldest army regiments in the country, first city to have hydro-electricity power, hub for IT companies as well as Biotechnology institutes and many more facts. This generated an urge in mind to study the transformation of Bengaluru since 1995 and therefore I chose this as my topic for the interview to do a comparative fact finding of the changes undergone in the vibrant city.

It was an interesting subject and I was equally curious to know the background of the city which has become my second home and has enamoured me with the educational bliss. The intriguing facets of Bengaluru have always drawn me to go into the roots and know more and more about how it turned into a colossal hub for India's business world, adding to the highs and lows to the Bulls and Bears of the Bombay Stock Exchange.

It was a scramble for searching a subject whom I could Interview and who could

give me an insight into the background of this city and also not be bored or very nostalgic in the process of conducting the interview. I wanted a non-partisan approach to the topic and a vivid description of the differences of the past to the present times. My choice automatically zeroed to Mrs Sumana Mukerjee, a close family relative residing in Whitefield. She has shifted from a rich history to a modern cosmopolitan city that is from Hyderabad to Bengaluru. She had been witness to the transformation and had been through the change of times and was now an adept citizen of the city. She had even learnt the dialect to be even with the fellow citizens. She had seen a generation change. Though she still believed in her Maharashtrian culture from her maiden years, she very well managed to the South Indian culture prevalent in Bengaluru. She still believed in Bengali rituals while she avidly supported Malayali ceremonies. Thus she became an integral part of the interview selected and a perfect blend to give me the best account regarding the transformation in Bengaluru, inoffensive to anyone.

For recording the insights of the interviewee, I took permission from Mrs Mukerjee to give a time slot for recording and conducting the interview. While in the process of the interview I went to her newly acquired residence in Whitefield. She also took me on a round to her old residence at HSR Layout. She pointed out the changes which the city had undergone through the years. She showed me the places where there were used to be scanty residences in the past yet now boasting of skyscrapers, the roads, now giving way to flyovers and the Metro, even the change of advertisement patterns at the roadside depicted the changes from the level of

infrastructure to media publicity methods . The lush green environment at some places giving now way to apartments. The dirty parts and the clean places of the city. The snail pace and the jet pace of the traffic could be compared visually hiding the harsh realities of Bengaluru's fast moving life.

I experienced the transformation of the city during the conversation looking into the eyes of my subject who very easily moved between the past and present giving me minute details. Several times I had to interject to bring her back from the nostalgia of the yester years, by posing questions, so that she would not be pained by the memories. She narrated a number of incidents about the past, shared experiences of even the waste segregation and Metro issues and virtually speaking she was the best subject to act as a subject for my Interview. I gained a lot of facts which I had not read even though being as prepared as I could be for the interview.

I also experienced how a person changes his lifestyle according to the inhabitation and environment. She said when she came to this city she was traumatised due to the rains which was common nearly every day and at any time so she nearly remained holed up in her home for a year and slowly she got used to the incessant downpours. The slushy roads became a common sight for her and the low temperatures caused problems with her health and to add more to the problem of allergies which always led to throat infections and scalp problems. There were ailments which were not even known to her. As her family also started growing, she had to tend to two girls and provide them education. She became busy in her daily routine which took most of her

time. She started learning French online and began some classes for teaching children and helped in adding to the earnings of her husband to support the family. Presently she has acquired a Doctorate in French and is also an associate professor in a foreign university and has to visit the USA once or twice in a semester.

The change in environment from Hyderabad to Bengaluru was definitely a drastic step for her family as the circle of people was quite different and the localities were much bigger. As the availability of food was concerned the interviewee could easily access the food stores. Mrs Mukerjee at first resided at the HSR layout which made it convenient for her to approach multi complexes of both daily necessities and clothing. However she faced number of problems in communicating and understanding the common language of the auto-rickshaw drivers, vendors and grocers became a major difficulty.

We further discussed about the Metro as a boon or a bane and the interviewee seemed quite satisfied with the introduction of the Metro as it became easier to commute long distances within time and avoid the long hours of waiting in the traffic and thus emitting less pollution.

Traffic was our main point of discussion as this city had flexible working hours due to the advent of the multinational and corporate cultures. The people had options of working from office at different times, also job opportunities grew manifold times as corporate sector was very attractive and could absorb a lot of manpower with good salaries and incentives, young men and women flocked to the city joining as freshers, getting trained and gaining work,

experience to transform into good managers. This led to massive flux of people to the city they had requirements of food, lodging and transport. Hence these sectors grew voluminous and led to development of increase in hostels and inflation grew multiple in the last decade.

People earned handsomely and spent luxuriously so there was an increase in automobile sales which increased the density of vehicle multiple times leading to traffic jams at odd hours and even hours roads became flooded with all types of vehicles ranging from luxury cars to buses and two wheelers and four wheelers. The one thing which was applaudable was even though the vehicles traffic grew its management, traffic management also caught pace and the conditions remained under control. The government of Karnataka took the care on a number of fronts like garbage management, traffic managements and strict laws were enforced so that people who defaulted had to pay penalties. This made a sense of belonging to develop among the residence therefore the situation which could have been alarming has been under control.

Mrs Mukerjee also discussed the problems of road blockage during heavy downpours creating more congestion and delaying the traffic for an hour at times too. The Interviewee also shared her opinion regarding the issue of waste management and she also came up with the concept of clearance versus the inputs which made me ponder over the amount of waste generated per household. Her little suggestions also taught me to reduce the waste and reuse to the maximum.

The interview also shed light on the shift in environmental conditions by comparing the past and the present scenario and the initiative of providing jute bags instead of plastic polybags. This can result in a major change in the environmental conditions if the households compulsorily abide by the rules. She also appreciated the efforts taken by the garbage segregation authorities and the volunteers monitoring the actions.

Increasing numbers did caused inflation to raise things and become costly and so the cost of living in this city rose to higher levels. People were forced to devise means to earn and make ends meet. This came heavily on the low income group which transformed to middle income groups by doing jobs which would have required out sourcing. The men in trade, workers who were good at carpeting, plumbing, catering and other such occupation grew along with the growing city. Workers doing odd jobs, like drivers, household workers and gardeners also got their share of earning elevated and lead to increase in basic level of living cost. New work options were created like security agencies and transport managers. With increasing apartments, labourers and skilled workers, supervisors also increased. This led to changes in the standard of living of the people residing in Bengaluru.

We also discussed the tussle between the North and South community and language where according to the interviewee; some areas are exposed to the North community which are willing to accept western communities while in certain localities people do not wish to communicate in any other language other than the local language. She gave a non-partisan view

upon this sensitive issue and with that ended my interview.

I did come across difficulties while recording the audio due to the disturbances by the family members and in order to overcome that we went to a separate room to conduct the interview. The interviewee was hesitant at first however I made sure to let her be comfortable with the set of questions and gave her enough time to answer the same.

The interviewee was an exchange of information to that side of Bengaluru which is not mentioned in websites or journals. It gave me an understanding of the Bengaluru which had risen from dust to such great heights – while a part of it still awaits development. Due to diversity of languages and communities it has a vibrant atmosphere however at the same time the issues of North-South community divide, language power, environmental depletion and modes of communications need to be addressed.

## **Institute of Aerospace Medicine Indian Air Force - An Exclusive Interview**

**Saagarika Mishra**

**B**angalore presently has seven units of Air Force, working in very different areas from a long time. Institute of Aerospace medicine (IAM) Indian Air Force (IAF) is one amongst them and is a premier Institute of Indian Air Force that is a hub of aerospace medicine in the country. This project was a part of our CIA in the oral history certificate course. It

has attempted to bring about the transformation of a small institute of medicine into a highly advanced and successful institute at present over a decade. IAM is the only institute of its kind in South Asia conducting Doctor of Medicine (MD) course in aerospace medicine, along with a number of courses in aerospace medicine for aircrew, medical officers and paramedics. IAM is specialized field of medicine that is concerned with the maintenance of health and performance of aircrew in aviation and space environment.

My interviewee was Wing Commander Manav Dutt Sharma who is a specialist in IAM and an instructor in the department of human engineering in aerospace medicine who has been its part from past fifteen to twenty years and has seen it developing first as a trainee himself and then as an instructor.

The interview started with introductory questions and then turned towards the core of it. The interview started with the officer speaking about his work in the institute i.e. his specialty is in occupational medicine where they try to fit the aircrew or the pilots both civil and military into the right environment, they are also involved in rehabilitation of the air crew who are suffering from any disability which has mandated downgradation of their medical category and are also in the business of giving consultancy to the national aircraft development programs which is quite a major task in itself and they are also into the area of Aeromedical Research.

When asked about the changes that happened in the institute over the past decades he spoke about the area that has

huge traffic around it used to be a kind of jungle pas sixteen years and spoke about how it was scary to venture out of the campus gate in the evening because of no vehicle and people outside on the roads and then he spoke about the huge football court that used to be there in the campus which is now a place where a new high performance human centrifuge has come up and many high performance imported machines have come up that gives the atmosphere of a real sky above the gravitational level.

He also spoke about how the whole atmosphere in and around the campus is so different from what it used to be in 1997.

When asked about his experience with the new machines as mentioned in one of his article in the quarterly magazine of IAM "To G or not to G" he spoke about it being very interesting where after just finishing his doctor of medicine course (MD) and getting retained as a faculty in the institute he started working in the department of acceleration physiology and a new high performance human centrifuge after it being just commissioned, he spoke about his unique experience of the centrifuge that is the only centrifuge in the whole Asia that in his first run where the pilot is subjected to the G run or the gravitation run where the pilot is asked to do anti G straining maneuver, the pilot didn't do it properly and lost consciousness WG Commander Sharma being an instructor could see the pilot in the camera losing consciousness and slumping around and his eyes rolling up and then he managed to bring the centrifuge outside the hall before the pilot actually loses consciousness. He said about the experience being scary as in his first run his worst nightmare came true. The instructor also speaks about Air Force IAM

in particular and says he is proud to be a part of such an important institution.

Towards the end when asked about his policy in life and his way of taking life he spoke about his life being pretty interesting and that he is a third generation fauji after his grandfather being in British Indian Army and becoming a Japanese POW in Singapore and his uncle being in the Indian army, he was a pediatrician and that he is the first in Air force. Then he spoke about his life has been interesting and god has been kind and he has had the opportunity to travel across the globe, he has been through the Americas through the Europe and been to the Far East. He said that life is an open book and the first principle that he has lived by is that if you don't travel then you are reading only one chapter of that book, so the more you travel the more you explore that book that's one, second thing he said that whatever you do in your life you got to do it the best of your ability and that you should be able to sleep peacefully at every single night knowing that you have given your best. Speaking about Aerospace medicine he said that it is the future and it is going to come in a big way and the institute itself is poised for greater heights much greater heights, they have already been bestowed with the center of excellence award from the Rajeev Gandhi University of health sciences and they have been judged with the best unit in the operation of the support role for the year two thousand fifteen and they have been given the chief of air staff citation for that. Towards the end he spoke about IAM and the people being so grateful and kind and ended by saying that it has to go a very long way.

This interview was a great experience I came to know about the real life style of an

air man and the complex dynamics of Institute of Aerospace Medicine. Interviewing Wing Commander Sharma was quite easy comfortable for me as he was quite convincing, humble and positive while answering. Although the interview provides only with the one person perspective of but it will help document the human history.

## **Agriculture and Agricultural Practices**

**Yashaswini**

**T**he topic for the interview was "agriculture and agricultural practices" and the methodology used for the interview was questionnaire method. And the questionnaire was an open ended questionnaire where in the questions were set for the interview and there was no restrictions set for the answers. The interview was carried out with a planned questionnaire and the questions that were set covered various issues related to the topic. As the topic was related to agriculture, questions related to the methods and techniques technology problems faced etc. were asked. The interview was a very good experience and also a very challenging one as well because it was difficult to communicate what exactly I was looking forward to and once the questions were answered it's difficult to analyse and interpret the findings from the interview.

As it was a personal interview only one person was interviewed and a questionnaire with selected set of questions was used and questions were put forward to get the

answers, and the questionnaire was framed categorically. It started with questions related to personal details like name, fathers name, age occupation location etc. and later it shifted towards the topic and in this case the topic was agriculture and agricultural practice so the questions related to family occupation, the source of family income, the amount of land holding etc. these questions gave the proper introduction of the person whom I interviewed and also the background of the family and how closely they are associated with agriculture.

The next set of questions were related to the crop pattern the seasons where different crops were sown and the harvested and also the type of crops that were cultivated and also the techniques and methods that were used to practice agriculture and also the usage of man power like how many labourers were involved in the agricultural practice and the questions related to wages and the types or methods of wage system and also the issue of equality of wages etc. were asked and also the issue of usage of modern techniques ,pesticide etc. were also asked.

As it is a common practice of joint family system in large agricultural families it was same with my subject as well. she belongs to a joint family various questions related to the type and nature of the family , contribution and participation of the family members in agricultural practice both men and woman and also the practice of share of produce or the division of income was also questioned her and also the issue of government support towards the farmers and the changes that have taken place with respect to agriculture over the course of time were the important areas that were stressed upon in the interview .

It was a very challenging experience because of the language Factor because to translate what was told in a native language can't be exactly translate so there will be few short comings here and there because of this issue. As it's an open ended questionnaire and there are no restrictions related to the answers there are chances that the answers will be drifted away from the topic.

And these answers will be part of their life experience so there are many sentiments and emotions that are associated with their past. Selecting the topic and finding a person who can be a proper subject to the interview was also very difficult and also to explain them the purpose of this interview and convince them to participate in the interview was also quite challenging. Once the topic was selected it was important to develop a proper theme or design how this interview should take place was what are the issues that have to be addressed and also kind of questions that have to be put forward to get a desired answers so even this was very interesting .

With the interview we can make lot of observances like the type of society the changes in the present day society the occupational changes the type of agricultural practice etc. we can see lot of changes in the present day society when it comes to family type methods of agricultural practice etc. so the drastic changes and the contrasting observances have been made with the interview .with the modernisation effect the amount of people associated with agriculture has changed there is a shift in major occupational trends where in people who practice agriculture not just confined to agriculture as there family occupation they are exploring new

areas . This interview is a very good experience for me as I have learnt a lot with reference to methodology, interpretation of data etc.

## **Experience of Oral History on the Topic of Present Technology Analyze Through Oral History**

**Varun S**

**M**y experience with Thirthamma was very unique and interesting by which I came across new things which I was unknown in my life. Thirthamma says to me that it was said her great grandmother said to her grandmother and passed on orally to her. The future of their generation was rightly known by them. It was known by palm leaves written by one sage in the kodimatha.

Even now it has been predicting the future with the help of the palm leaves. Like world situation, country situation and future activity of the man. When I was interviewing her it was comfortable and she was very cooperative bold enough to share everything what grandmother said to her. She spoke what her grandmother said to her about future generation that they will lead comfortable life without hard work what we are doing at present. There will no need of much effort or hard work for washing clothes using of water or grinding etc which we are suffering now. They can earn by sitting in the home. They can also communicate even being far of lakhs of kilometres by sitting in the home and even they can watch their generation even being far of thousands of kilometre what

happening in the world. Money will play as the important tool in their life with the money they purchase anything what they need in fraction of seconds. Cows and buffaloes become source of income and look after in the home.

All the diseases like (plague) they find out a medicine and there will be very much development the medical world and there will be death span decrease and less people of handicap given birth. They will be fair enough. The women in the old generation are mandatory to get married whereas the upcoming generation has changed such status of the women and actively participated in all the sectors. Women are given equal status to the men. They will earn and live mens there will be less discrimination and education will play a important role in the people's life and it will be the tool for livelihood.

My experience with oral History she revealed what her grand have said to her and she didn't ask much because she was not matured, she was child.

## **The Problem of Migration**

**Ramprasad P**

**M**igration is pacific as long as it doesn't distress or disturb the opportunities, hegemony or preferences of the natives. But inevitably migration does change the culture, food habits, language, wage-rate, demand etc. of the land. This status quo is universal and has prompted many vicissitudes in the minds of people.

The concept of togetherness of humans and acceptance of new people, things gets disturbed and in end, the voice for seclusion becomes stronger and deeper. Be it the United States of America, be it the United Kingdom, be it Sri Lanka, be it Palestine and be it a city like Bengaluru. When the natives feel that their rights are compromised, their jobs are taken away, their language, religion, and culture is threatened immediately they want to build a wall from others. They just want to live by themselves.

When I was asked to document a history by interviewing someone, I choose to document the problems caused by migration. Instead of taking a mainstream well-studied conflict area, I wanted to concentrate my study on a place whose conflict is not much documented or written.

As a result I chose this small village Chettipodhunur which near Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately, the migrant's problem in this village also turned a language conflict and communal conflict. To understand the dynamics of that place, I interviewed Dr. Krishnaswami, a multi-lingual writer and a professor at Christ University. He was born in Pollachi and had spent his childhood in Chettipodhunur. The village has two names. One is Chettipodhunur and the another name is Poppanurpudur. Even many people in the village don't know how it got those two names. But Dr. Krishnaswami tells us the reason behind it. The name 'Poppanurpudur' is because of the majority of people commonly known as 'koundergal' were from eastern districts of the state. They were allowed to take shelter in that village by a great Zamindar called 'Poppanamanradiyar'. Hence it is called as

Poppanurpudar. The literal meaning of the word 'Pudur' is 'new town'. The other name Chettipodhunur came because of the migrants are known as 'Chettiar'. They were Telugu speaking people from Andra Pradesh during Vijaynagar Empire. They started migrating in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and currently, 70% of the people living here are of Chettiar community and the rest 30% of people are Kounders. That is the only village which has Chettiar community majority when compared to any other villages in that area. In all other villages, Kounders form the majority of the population.

Whenever people migrate from one place to other or seek refuge in another state, there is always a reason behind it. People migrate for many different reasons. There are various 'push' and 'pull' factors for why people generally migrate. Negative factors at home like lack of prospects for career advancement, poverty and low incomes, high unemployment rates, persecution, ill-treatment of people, internal conflict and war, natural disasters, climate change and famine cause this 'push'. Here when I asked what the reason was for the migration of these Chettiars from then Vijaynagar Empire to this region he said, the main purpose was to do business here and earn better profits. They initially sold cigar rates, chilies, and later plantation crops in this region. The Chettairs were smart in their business and after a point, they started buying large plots of lands in this region. When I was hearing this from him, I felt it was of no different how Jews occupied Palestine. It made me realize how migration is a global phenomenon and in all periods of history, it had been happening. He said currently those businesses are reduced due to competition and they only buy and sell

coconut in that areas now. The prospects of this coconut business are because of their ancestors who had bought huge chunk of agricultural lands in this region.

Dr. Krishnaswami says they were all living in peace and when he was a kid, even his parents had asked him to address them as his relatives. They mingled really well and each respected others. They had their own temples respectively. Chettiars had Angalaparameswari as their prime goddess and so had Kounders, the Goddess kamacheeamman. You are waiting for a twist! Ain't you? Yes. There is a twist in the story. That year during an holy procession in their village, a hullabaloo arose between both on who has the rightful authority to get carry on the proceedings. Chettiars felt that even after these many years they weren't considered as natives. They questioned the proceedings of Kounders going first and also accepting the prasad first in the temple even though they had built the temple. On the other hand, Kounders too claimed that it's their right and migrants have no say in it.

As a 13-year-old boy, Krishnaswami says he was jeopardized of situation going on in the street. Hatred was shared by both the communities and they both approached the court to seek justice in the matter. The procession which was planned earlier was stalled and later even the court ordered not to carry on the procession until the things are smoothened up. He remembers all the elders saying that they had never seen such unpleasant happening in the village to the best their memory.

A common panchayat election approached three villages combined in 1965 and the votes were highly divided because of these identity politics going around. As an

upshot, the Chettair community people triumphed the elections. Krishnaswami recollects that their regular life was paralyzed and the parents were even afraid to send them schools. He says earlier they used to walk four kilometres for schooling and never felt that differences with Chettiars. He reminisces that most of his close friends were from Chettiar community and latter conflicts which were going on the village had seeded this poison of caste difference, language politics etc. into their young minds. He says generally Chettairs are kinder than Kounders and they were afraid and it maybe because they were outsiders and people who speak a different language.

At the period there weren't any toilets to excrete human waste. Everyone in the village would come in the mornings to the lands of Kounder only to defecate. One morning, when a Chettiars had come to an open field of Kounder to defecate, he was hit by a Kounder family. This galloped the brawls between the two communities. When I asked him, Was casteism that much deep rooted into the minds of people, he replied affirmatively and narrated me an incident to make me realize how identity played a crucial role and made people blind of rationality. As soon as the incident occurred, police were deployed in the village to stop any more untoward incidents. He says that the joke was that Kounder community people tied themselves to sham the police that they harassed them. The most remembered thing for him was that he saw a sister who was then married two days back took a fat wooden log, out crying who stopped his relative. He chuckles saying she is dead now. Even though it was mid-night, she ran furiously despised them all. He says

remembers well all of that. He says a girl who didn't even know what is going on, ran furiously in that mid- night despising the kounder community.

He says the problem continued for years until one of the leaders approached to mediate between them. The Chettiars built a temple of their own with their money and the old temple was later left for common use. And he said the court never gave a verdict on the issue and it just wants to delay it so that the villagers get their time to

resolve it of their own. He said after he moved out of the town for his higher education and was not in continuous touch with the developments.

I chose to document this just to tell the readers that this problem of migration is not an only trans-border issue current issue, but it existed throughout the history of mankind and in all places of the world.

# **PROGRAMMES**

## **DOCTORAL (PhD)**

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in International Studies**

**M Phil**

**Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in International Studies**

## **POSTGRADUATE**

**Master of Arts (MA) in International Studies**

## **UNDERGRADUATE**

**Bachelor of Arts (BA) in  
Economics, Political Science, and Sociology**

**Bachelor of Arts (BA) in  
History, Economics, and Political Science**



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