

Smitha Rao

Boston College School of Social Work

(206) 422-8735

smitha.rao@bc.edu

EDUCATION

PhD Candidate. Boston College School of Social Work. Chestnut Hill, MA. United States.

Proposed dissertation title: "Before the lightning strikes": Preparedness, Capacities, and Social Welfare Policy. Micro, meso, and macro correlates of disaster preparedness. (Expected 2021)

M.Sc. Environment & Development. Department of Geography. Kings College London. United Kingdom. 2011

Commonwealth Scholarship

Distinction - Master's Thesis

M.A. in Social Work. Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Mumbai. India. 2005

Extensive field practicum and placements; worked on issues ranging from family welfare to community development & women's political empowerment.

B.A. – Journalism, Honors, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India. 2003

First Division

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Rao, S.*, Woo, B.*, Maglalang, D. D.*, Bartholomew, M., Cano, M., Harris, A., Tucker, T. B. (Accepted). Race and Ethnicity in the Social Work Grand Challenges. *Social Work*. (* Equal Contributors).

Kumar, P., Dover, R. E., Iriarte, A. D. V., **Rao, S.**, Garakani, R., Hadingham, S., Dhand, A., Tabak, R. G., Brownson, R. C., & Yadama, G. N. (2020). Affordability, accessibility, and awareness in the adoption of liquefied petroleum gas: A case-control study in rural India. *Sustainability* (Switzerland), 12(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12114790>

Rao, S. Teixeira, S.* (2020). The Green New Deal: Social Work's Role in Environmental Justice Policy. *Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swaa004> (*Equal Contributors)

Rao, S., Dahal, S., Hadingham, S., & Kumar, P. (2020). Dissemination challenges of liquefied petroleum gas in rural India: Perspectives from the field. *Sustainability* (Switzerland), 12(6), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062327>

Rao, S. (2020). A natural disaster and intimate partner violence: Evidence over time. *Social Science and Medicine*, 247(January), 112804. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.112804>

Lombe, M., **Rao, S.**, & Chu, Y. (2019). Child Nutrition: Introduction and Overview of Issue. In *Zero Hunger, Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 1–11). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69626-3_85-1

Kumar, P., **Rao, S.**, & Yadama, G. N. (2019). Energy Poverty in India. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, July 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.1298>

Srinivasan, K., **Rao, S.** (2015). Meat Cultures in Globalizing India. *Economic and Political Weekly*. L (39), 13-15.

Rao, S., “Saffronisation of the Holy Cow – Unearthing Silent Communalism” . *Economic and Political Weekly*. April 9, 2011, Volume XLVI, No. 15.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Rao, S. (2019). India has adopted a colonizer’s approach to tribal populations. *The Hindustan Times*. September 4, 2019. Available at: <https://buff.ly/2WhxGgu>

Srinivasan, K., Kasturirangan, R., & **Rao, S.** (2018). Conservation scapegoats and developmentality. *Seminar: The Monthly Symposium*, (702), 18-22. Available at: <https://buff.ly/2C1naTW>

Kasturirangan R., **Rao, S.** (2016). Interrogating Bharatiyata: A Response to an interview with Govindacharya. *The Wire*. June 29, 2016. Available at: <https://thewire.in/politics/interrogating-bharatiyata-a-response-to-an-interview-with-govindacharya>

Srinivasan, K., **Rao, S.**, Kasturirangan, R. (2015). Killing Off India’s Dogs is Not the Way to Get Rid of Its’ Rabies Problem. *The Wire*. September 12, 2015. Available at: <https://thewire.in/health/killing-off-indias-dogs-is-not-the-way-to-get-rid-of-its-rabies-problem>

Srinivasan, K., & **Rao, S.** (2015). A multipronged approach is needed to control dog menace. *The Hindustan Times*. September 15, 2015. Available at: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/a-multipronged-approach-is-needed-to-control-dog-menace/story-xWmfuEAVI2Or913Ia9yhLJ.html>

Kasturirangan, R., Srinivasan, K., **Rao, S.** (2014). Dark and Dairy: The Sorry Tale of the Milch Animals. *The Hindu*. November 9, 2014. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/the-sorry-tale-of-the-milch-animals/article6578663.ece>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environment-Development-Social Policy; Energy Poverty; Contextual Vulnerability; Natural Disasters; Climate Adaptation and Resilience; Environmental Justice.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

January 2020- ongoing

Student Investigator

Principal Investigator: Anita Shankar, PhD, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Project: Impacts of Clean Cookstoves and Empowerment Training on Women's Health and Well Being in Humanitarian Settings in Rwanda.

Grant Source: Clean Cooking Alliance (previously the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves); supported by National Institutes for Health, Implementation Science Network for Clean Cooking and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative of the South African Medical Research Council/World Bank Award.

Propose research questions; qualitative data analysis; conduct literature review; write manuscripts; and participate in weekly planning meetings.

July 2019 - Ongoing

Research Assistant

Principal Investigator: Kyle Crowder, Ph.D., Blumstein-Jordon Endowed Professor in Sociology, University of Washington, Seattle.

Project: Demographic Vulnerability, Neighborhood Pollution, and Racial Health Disparities.

Grant Source: Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development.

Conduct literature review; write manuscripts; and participate in biweekly interdisciplinary meetings.

September 2018- ongoing

Research Assistant

Faculty Supervisor: Praveen Kumar, PhD, Assistant Professor, Boston College School of Social Work.

Principal Investigator: Gautam N Yadama, PhD, Professor and Dean, School of Social Work

Project: Understanding household, network and organizational drivers of adoption, sustained use and maintenance of clean cooking fuels in rural India.

Grant Source: Clean Cooking Implementation Science Network (ISN) led by the Fogarty

International Center (FIC) with support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund).

Quantitative and qualitative data management and analysis; field and research liaison; development and writing of research manuscripts.

2017- 2018

Research Assistant

Supervisor: Gautam N Yadama, PhD, Professor and Dean, Boston College School of Social Work.

Assisted in developing study designs and manuscripts.

2011-2017

Independent researcher

Part of various research teams in peri-academic and community engaged research settings involving background research, data-collection, qualitative and policy analysis.

FUNDING & AWARDS

- 2020. Recipient, Dorothy Book Research Paper Award, BCSSW. Awarded to the doctoral student with the best paper published, in press, or accepted for publication.
- Boston College School of Social Work Conference Travel Grants 2018-2020.
- 2019. Ad hoc funding for “Inclusive Excellence” projects from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Boston College. \$2000
- 2019. Funding for management of BCSSW journal *Beyond Borders*. \$6000
- 2017-2020. Doctoral fellowship, Boston College School of Social Work. \$138,000
- 2009-2010. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship funded by the Department for International Development (DFID)

TEACHING

Boston College, Boston MA

Teaching Assistant, School of Social Work, Boston College

Fall 2020

- Teaching multiple sessions for SCWK 8840-01 *Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Implications for Social Work* (MSW elective)
Focus: Contextual Vulnerability, Climate change Adaptation, Resilience, Disasters, Gender and climate change
- Guest lecturer on Gender and Environmental Public Health for ENV5 3345-01 *Environment and Public Health* (Undergraduate course)

Fall 2019

- Curriculum development and Teaching Assistant for SCWK8899, *Understanding the Environment and Climate Vulnerable Populations* (MSW elective)
Faculty Supervisor: Dr Praveen Kumar
Focus: Contextual Vulnerability, Climate change Adaptation, Resilience, Disasters, Gender and climate change

Spring 2019

- Teaching Assistant for SCWK7701, *Social Welfare System* (MSW, 2 sections)
Faculty Supervisor: Dr Shanta Pandey
Focus: Immigration Policies and Immigrants' Access to Social Welfare; NASW Legislative Education and Advocacy Day.
- Teaching Assistant for SCWK9960, *Regression Analysis for Social and Behavioral Research* (PhD, 1 section)
Faculty Supervisor: Dr Ce Shen

Spring 2018

- Teaching Assistant for SCWK7701, *Social Welfare System* (MSW, 4 sections)
Faculty Supervisor: Dr Shanta Pandey
Led sessions on preparing for the NASW Legislative Education and Action Day at the MA State House.

Portland State University, Portland OR

Adjunct, Department of Geography

Sept 2011-June 2012

- Conceived, created course content and taught Geography course Geog352 - "Geography of Himalaya and Tibet" (Undergraduate)

PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

- Tucker, T.B., **Rao, S.**, Woo, B., Bartholomew, M.W., Cano, M., Harris, A., & Maglalang, D.D. Where are Race/Ethnicity and Racism in the Grand Challenges for Social Work? Paper presentation, Winter Roundtable, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. (February 2020).
- **Rao, S.** Natural Disasters and Intimate Partner Violence: Before and after the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. Poster presentation, Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. Washington, DC (January 15-19, 2020).
- Teixeira, S., **Rao, S.**, Luce, C., Billiot, S., & Mitchell, F. The Green New Deal and its social work implications: A critical examination and discussion. Roundtable presentation. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. Washington, DC (January 15-19, 2020).
- **Rao, S.** Role of affordability, accessibility, and awareness (3As) in adoption of cleaner cooking technologies (LPG) in rural India. Poster presentation, Ethical Challenges in Global Public Health: Climate Change, Pollution and the Health of the Poor, organized by Global Public Health and the Common Good, the Theology Department, and the School of Theology and Ministry, Boston College. September 16, 2019.
- **Rao, S.** Natural Disasters and Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from the 2004 Tsunami. Poster presentation, Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. (January 16-20, 2019).
- Harris, A.N., Bartholomew M., Cano, M., **Rao, S.**, Woo, B. Integrating a Racial Justice Approach to Social Work to end systemic racial violence. Roundtable presentation, Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research. (January 16-20, 2019).

- **Rao S.** Politics of Cultural Symbols & Community Perceptions. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, New York City, NY. (2012).
- **Rao, S.** Animated Representations: Animals, Media & Place. Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA. (2011).

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

2019-2020 Task Force Member. CSWE Environmental Justice Curricular Guide Task Force.

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

2020- Ongoing. Student Representative. Boston College School of Social Work Doctoral Committee.

2019- Ongoing. Student Representative. Curriculum Subcommittee- Equity Justice and Inclusion working group, Boston College School of Social Work.

2019. Planning committee member. Transforming the Ivory Tower: A Seminar to Help First Generation and/or POC Doctoral Students of Color in Social Work Thrive.

2018-2019. Student Leader. Boston College Doctoral Student Group.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Pacific Bamboo Resources

Seattle, WA, United States

Associate Director

Oct 2012 – June 2017

- Managed projects on national and international agro-forestry and farming community projects.
- Coordinated fiduciary responsibilities for multi-year Lennox Foundation grant toward the support of a women centric bamboo project in Kenya.
- Advanced grant proposals and generated funds to support Morethana Farm operations and affiliated staff.
- Secured funding from Sustainability Committee of Seattle Rotary and Tamaki Foundation and increased support annually from partnership inception in 2012; first and largest grantee of committee.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Guwahati, India

Research Associate

Feb 2011 – Jun 2011

- Developed curriculum for the MA program in Social Work at the TISS North East campus.
- Coordinated student volunteers at the Right to Information(RTI) National Convention in Shillong

Greenpeace India/International, Actions & Research Unit

India/Netherlands

Campaigner

May 2007 – Aug 2009

- Designed campaign strategies based on environmental analysis and background research; field travel to sites and liaising with community members, government departments, and subject matter experts.
- Participated in overseas and national environmental campaigns.

- Coordinated with 40 national regional offices to develop and deliver 2010 Global Plan for international campaigns on Climate Change, Oceans, Toxics and Sustainable agriculture.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India

Program Associate

May 2005 – March 2007

- Established post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction center in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders.
- Conceived and delivered certificate course in sustainable development for the Nicobarese community; focus on creating a leadership cadre in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

RESEARCH SOFTWARE

- Quantitative statistical analysis (Stata, SPSS, LISREL-SIMPLIS)
- Qualitative data analysis (ATLAS.TI)

OTHER

- Certificate of completion. Online short course: “An Equity-Approach to Pandemic Preparedness and Response” offered jointly by Partners in Health and University of Global Health Equity. 2020.
- Coordinating Team member. People’s Climate Network.
<https://pcn.earth/post/190118087767/the-first-peoples-climate-report> Media coverage:
<https://scroll.in/article/951526/climate-change-policies-will-continue-to-fall-short-unless-we-hand-the-mic-to-those-most-hurt-by-it>
- Certificate of completion. Online module: ‘Social Vulnerability and Disasters’ offered by CONVERGE, National Hazards Center at University of Colorado, Boulder. 2019.
- Specialized in Economic and Social Research Council module ‘*Practicing Social Research 2*’ with coursework in Ethnography, Actor Network Theory, and Policy Analysis.