

Le manège de la frontière: A study of Roxham Road, Quebec

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Abstract

This presentation will explore the interconnections between migration for post-secondary education and marriage migration in the case of Indian international students coming to Canada. With the de-emphasis of family reunification policies and toughening requirements for the points threshold to qualify for economic immigration to Canada, there has been a concomitant rise in the number of Indians applying to migrate to Canada as international students. Given that spouses of international students are eligible for open work permits, marriage migrants have also embraced post-secondary education as a pathway towards permanent residency. These pathways are further supported by infrastructure in India, wherein Canadian colleges regularly hold education and recruitment fairs, publish advertisements in local newspapers and work with immigration consultants to channel students seeking admission to one- and two-year degree or diploma programmes. Drawing upon fieldwork in Punjab, India, longform interviews with female international students in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); policy developments around international students; as well as media reports and matrimonial advertisements in India and Canada; this research examines the gendered implications of education, marriage and migration across India, Canada and the Indian diaspora. Special attention is paid to the experiences of women in navigating their personal ambitions to pursue higher education alongside their families' or husbands' desire to migrate. Through the growing phenomenon of matrimonial advertisements that indicate the English language proficiency scores of prospective brides, the research will show how education as a pathway for migration has become entangled with the standards of *marriageability* for women and shifting gender dynamics related to issues of dowry and violence against women and men. Finally, bringing together the pre- and post-migration experiences of Indian international students in Canada, the presentation will look at class and caste-based hierarchies that 'travel' with migration and transform within the Indian diaspora in Canada.

Biography

Harshita Yalamarty (she/her) holds a PhD in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies from York University, Tkaronto. Her doctoral work examined the experiences of marriage migrant women from India to Canada in relation to migration policies, expectations of household and care labour, as well as caste communities in the diaspora. Her other research interests include migrant workers' rights, settler colonialism and Hindu right-wing mobilization and Islamophobia in India and Canada. She holds an MPhil and MA in Political Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Her previous research has looked at the role of law in women's lives in India through the multiple constructions of public/private spheres, and the transnational marriage abandonment of women in India. She has taught at York University and the University of Delhi. Her work has been published in *Studies in Social Justice*, *Women's Studies International Forum* and *Violence Against Women*.