Priya's Diary

1.

While I was studying for my L.L.B. in India I applied for my Masters in Law in some Universities in UK. I knew, coming from very orthodox and middle class family, I could go only if I get full scholarship as I had done all my education on scholarship. So when I received my ODASSS scholarship, my happiness knew no boundaries. I went to Bristol University to do my masters - against the family and community wishes. I knew I was the only girl form my community and family who was doing this.

My masters experience in Bristol was very good, I soon settled in and made friends and got good emotional support there. My dept offered me a place to do a Ph.D, but I was not very sure about myself and I needed some break and brain storming. So without thinking much I rejected the offer and went home. There I started working with a lawyer and made sure that I wanted to do PhD.

So I made a proposal and applied to some UK Universities. I had a financial problem as my family could not afford and would not support me to go for PhD as they wanted me to get married and forget all these western ideas.

As I had ODASSS for my masters, I could not apply to most of the scholarships for international students. But this did not dampen my spirits and I made up my mind that whatever tiny amount of money I had saved I would use that to go to Barchester and to try my best to arrange for my funds to finish my PhD. I knew this was bit risky but I had to take this leap, otherwise I was fully aware that my dream of doing PhD would need to be locked in the deepest of my heart. So here I was with no family support, no financial support but just with my hard-work, efforts and hope and good faith in the almighty.

Q 1 Draw up a list of the key information should Priya have at this stage.

Q 2 What specific questions should she have addressed in advance?

2.

As a PhD student I was told that I could come anytime I like. My course was to begin on 1st of Oct, 2002 and my brother was getting married on 17th of Sept, so I got a ticket to come to Barchester on 27th of Sept. I called up the Law Dept and told them so. And I called up the accommodation office asking them to reserve a room for me On this I was told that they guarantee that I would get an accommodation but they cannot guarantee me where would I get an accommodation. This assured me nonetheless.

So I arrive at Barchester airport on Friday 27th and was shocked to note that there was no arrangement for me to be taken to the city. As I had come from India, I had lot of luggage and very limited monetary resources with me. So I took a bus to come to the city centre. I do not want to remember how I managed to put all my luggage in the bus. On the bus I got friendly with a Taiwanese girl and tried to ask her about Barchester and her stories made me get very disappointed as she seemed to be least happy with the resources and complained about the exorbitant rates [rents?].

I arrived at the bus stop and decided to take taxi to go to the accommodation office, there I arrived without slightest of imagination what I had to face. The office was complete chaos and over crowded. I took about 2 hours to manage to reach to the front of the queue and then I was told point blankly that there was no accommodation whatsoever and they could put me up in a hotel room for that night and then the next day I would need to check out from the hotel and queue up again at 8 in the morning to see if something was available.

I tried to remind them their promise by showing their letter, but in vain. Then I asked if my name could be placed on waiting list so I would come to know about the progress. When I was told that there is no waiting list and students will be served on first come first service I was too shocked to react. As an international student you travel on your own and arrive to the accommodation office and queue up and get nowhere. The amount of money we spend here, we do expect better service for that value of money. Why do they expect us to come a month in advance and make sure that we get some accommodation? This is an attitude to rob us and there is total lack of professionalism and caring attitude towards international students. Northern England was expected to be cheaper, but it seems it is cheaper only on paper.

Q 1 Discuss the reception arrangements for international students at Barchester.

Q 2 What should Priya do now?

3.

Just by God's grace I bumped into an Indian girl, who offered to me that I could stay with her for that night. I was too relieved and so I left my luggage with the accommodation office and went with her to hunt a room for myself. But very soon I was run down by exhaustion of international travel which was around 36 hrs long. I went with her to her room and forgot about everything. I was happy to find someone who could shelter me for weekend, as the accommodation office was not open on weekends.

During this time I did everything which was possible I tried to find some private accommodation, but mostly was advised against it for safety reasons. I had spent a huge amount trying to call people and visiting these housings. There were other problems: not only I did not have any luggage with me that meant no clean clothes and no toiletries, but also, I could not open a bank account as I did not have a permanent address and housing contract which are the pre-requisites for an international student wishing to have a student account. That meant I was left with almost no cash and could not convert my demand draft.

On Monday 30th Sept , at the accommodation office, I was hit hard by the same chaos and I started losing hope to get some accommodation, and was almost in tears. I did not know what I could do. I could not find any private accommodation and the University was not ready to accept the responsibility of sheltering me.

Q 1 Comment on the accommodation arrangements as experienced by Priya.

Q 2 What should Priya do now?

4.

I had an appointment to go to the administration office of the Law Dept, and so off I went. There I met the officer and was told that I could be registered on 1st of Oct. and I got some information about my supervisors. So I went to the library to get a temporary card.

But this was not end of my problems. As I was not registered that meant I could not log in to the clusters. After some coaxing and pleading I was told about couple of computers which could be used without the username and password. I got in touch with my supervisors and postgraduate tutor and fixed an appointment with them.

I had been told that Barchester was very beautiful and safe place, but since I got here I received exactly the opposite impression. Everyone was warning me about the unsafe Barchester, and how attacks on students were a common thing. This made me question my decision of studying here for 3 years .

Q 1 Any further suggestions on administrative arrangements?

Q 2 What would you now advise Priya?

5.

I spent 30th and 31st desperately trying to sort out my accommodation and failing to do so. I promised myself that I would take a flight home if I could not get something by the end of 2nd Oct.

On 1st of Oct, I was hit by other unexpected development. That is my papers for registration were not ready and I was asked to keep contacting the administration office for further developments. Now there was no one on the earth who could make me believe that Barchester was a well-organised university.

I went to meet my post-graduate tutor and told her about all this and she assured me that things will be fine. Her comforting voice helped me, and I went to see my supervisors. I was greeted my two smiling and open ladies and that helped me a lot to calm down. On their enquiry how was I settling down, I could not help to pour out all my problems. (Though fully aware that this was our first meeting, the impression will last forever).

Then they asked me about my research and we talked some about my topic.
They told me though they repeatedly requested the administrative office to give them back my application form and research proposal that had been sent to them two months ago so they could be more informed,. I had been given a place and I had accepted it, but the supervisors were not provided with my papers.

They then asked me to settle down first and then get in touch with them to discuss my proposal later. I came out feeling a lot better. I had the feeling that both these ladies were very nice, warm and caring persons and I was relieved a lot. As I strongly believe that a supervisor can make or break your PhD.

Q 1 Discuss the reception Priya received in her department.

Q 2 What should she do now?

6.

Meanwhile I met a post-graduate who wanted to move out from her room. I went to the accommodation office and was told to get her contract and key, so they could allocate me the room. I told them that I wanted to reserve the room and I could pay them the deposit but they assured me that the room cannot be allocated unless and until the key is returned. So off I go to get the keys. But by the time I got back, I was told that the room had been given to someone else. That took away the slightest hope I had in my heart.

I was too upset and angry. I did not know what to do. I had no money. Nowhere to live and no-one to help me. I could not even go back home as my draft could not be converted into money without a bank account and that meant I could not buy a ticket. I was crying and felt very lonely. I had no choice but to ask the Indian girl to shelter me for some more time and I began to feel very helpless and opportunist.

Q Have you any further suggestions for Priya at this stage?

7.

I met another post-graduate who told me that there was a room vacant in his flat [which was only available to boys]. But I went to the accommodation office with a letter from the other occupants saying that they do not have an objection if I move in. That worked and I got a room at last!!!!!!!

I was so happy that I did not pay attention to things like though the rent which was very high or that they don't provide bedding or for that matter any study lamp and internal telephone connection. So I got a room by afternoon of 2nd Oct.

This enabled me to open my bank account. But I was so horrified to find that banks were giving appointments of one week after you approach them, as they were over-burdened and did not have enough staff. This made me realise that the concept of developed and organised country is not applicable to UK.

Now, my registration. The administration office for post-graduates is run by just one person, who works for very short hours. Unfortunately when I was asked to contact her for my registration, she was travelling and would be away for 1 week. So there I was left without any registration. After lot of running around I got to registered on 15th instead of 1st of Oct.

Then I had to orient myself with my dept and university. I went to find out if I could get a tour around the library and was told that all the library orientations were done for this term. I was very disappointed to know how ill-prepared the whole university is for the PhD students.

Q 1 Have you any further suggestions for the University?

Q 2 And any suggestions for Priya?

8.

Being an international student I do need lot of emotional support. To look for it I made lot of inquiries, and I was told about the international student's centre. Which is run by very ill-enthusiastic staff of 2 and is open for 2 hours a day. All they do is take a day trip every month. So if you cannot make it, you loose out on a month's program. I wish they did more than that, like organising things at different timings and different days so it could cater to bigger number of students. Barchester just fails to provides some emotional support and I am sure it affects studies of lots of students.

As all clouds have silver linings, throughout all this process I was taken care of this God sent girl who sheltered me and by my supervisors who always helped me and advised me. I am so happy to get such supervisors, they been introducing me to other staff and told me that I could make use of their books and other resources. I was very hesitant to give them calls and they told me that I should feel comfortable to call them at office and residence. Of my financial difficulties, they have been supportive and trying to help me to get some scholarships and some administrative or research assisting job in the dept.

So here I am at the end of one month, hoping to do my PhD and giving my best efforts and keeping my fingers crossed. As I realised my PhD is not even started and this makes me shiver with terror.

Q Have you any suggestions for Priya or her supervisors at this stage?

9.

On 15th October I got registered thus got entitled to get the keys to the Post-graduate suite. Earlier in my department research students had separate offices. Owing to isolation students were not very happy, so a common basement with separate rooms for computer cluster, working desks, small kitchen, and a locker room were made. I think it nurtures a good working atmosphere, as at any time there are at least couple of research students working there. I enjoy working and studying there as my culture is very social and I like to have people around me. Not only it feels very nice but it also is very conducive for study and research, as everyone around you is trying to work and the pressure helps positively.

I started to get to know other research students and tried to make friends. Initially it was difficult, as most of them had been here at least for a year, and didn't have the need to make new friends. On the other hand, for emotional support and to be able to settle down I needed to have good circle of friends around me. This was not helping me to lessen my stress.

One day I read, one of the interviews with a migrant from Pakistan, which were done for my supervisor's research. I got very interested and asked if she would like me to do some interviews with Indians, adding that though I am amateur in field of interviews my interest is not lessened. Thus, I did 2 interviews, and on receiving approval I did about 20 interviews with Indian families, which migrated from India/Africa. In the background of me being new to the city and having no contacts, I had to start from scratch. I went out of my way and talk to people and convince them to talk to me. The reasons I wanted to do interviews were: firstly, it was not only a challenge but a new experience for me. Furthermore, I wanted to explore all methods of research and wanted to start working with a set goal. Secondly, I am very interested in "migration", and thirdly, I needed the money!

In addition to a very good feed-back, it dawned upon me that I am good with interviews, and could do empirical research very well. It helped me to familiarise myself with the city and to make some good Indian friends, who gave me lot of emotional support in all these months. Furthermore, the friendship with these families made me see a different side of India and culture and issue of migration, which is one of my interests. On the other hand, I learned that it is very difficult to detach myself from their issues and problems and I could not look at them as mere "subjects".

Fortunately my supervisor agreed with my view of "subject is a human being and his/her feelings are of utmost importance". I did some transcribing and translations as well for some of these interviews, and after a month, that is in middle of November, I handed in my assignment.

Q 1 Discuss the strategy of involving students in staff research projects.

Q 2 What should Priya do now?

10.

My supervisors were a great support to me. I had told them about my financial difficulties and cultural struggles, on our first meeting itself. Every now and then they would make sure that I was fine and all my questions were answered. Not only they introduced me to other faculty members, but passed the word that I was looking for some research assistantship. I was very touched by their efforts, concern and warmth. I always got feed-back very quickly, either the same day or the latest the day after I submitted any work or asked any questions. I did not have any seminars with my supervisors yet, as my proposal is very crude at this stage, but every week I try to tell them what I am doing and I can approach them anytime.

The only thing I miss is to be able to meet them outside the academic circle. I would like to know them as friends and talk to them about other things besides research. I fail to appreciate the University regulations about the supervisor and student relationship. In my opinion more friendly relationship will help a lot, one could be more open and honest with the supervisors. For the same reason, I wanted to get some research work from them. Unfortunately, there were very limited opportunities, nonetheless I was assured that I would be given the first preference.

The post-graduate tutor is very good and supportive, and very easy to approach, she was helpful to me throughout. And I do appreciate her support. Whereas the post-grad administrator is not approachable at all, and students get very scared to approach her as it looks like she will be upset, and loose her temper, so it becomes bit difficult to get your work done through her.

I finished the interviews with Indian families during November. I assisted other professor from the department with his data imputing on the computer. Though not very challenging, it was good way of earning some money. I finished it by beginning of Dec.

Q 1 Discuss Priya's experience and expectations of relationships with staff.

Q 2 What should she do now?

11.

What about my own research? In mid-Oct my supervisors and I discussed what I wanted to do. After couple of meetings I was advised by my supervisors to try to make best use of my background of being "Indian", and to make my research more applicable and practical. Mind you, in doing this they never ever tried to pursue me to change or remould my ideas. They patiently asked me to think and write and discuss with them about what I would like to do, as it is "my Ph.D."

I came up with some points that I was interested in India, European Union and women and Migration. I wanted to interweave all this, neither making it too narrow nor too broad. I met my supervisors at least once a fortnightly, for short time to show what I was working or to ask questions. They were always there for me, suggesting reading materials, lending me their resources, introducing me to other faculty members. The best thing is they reply to my emails within hours time!

To define my area, I have been reading a lot. I have voluntarily attended some of the lectures of my supervisors which were for undergraduates. The IT department had organised lots of training courses, but as I have the basic knowledge of most of the Microsoft I use or might use in future, I did not attend any of their courses but as far as I am aware there are no other training courses mentioned for me.

During all this, my supervisors were very cautious of not forcing me to do something which is of no interest to me. At the same time they wanted to make sure that, I should have good scope and career. At the end of the month, we decided that I should try to write a background chapter.

I have not really used the library so much yet, as I am still reading the electronic resources and secondly my field is so dynamic that I have to read the most currant information, which is easy to find on web than in books.

Q 1 What role should training courses have for first year doctoral students?

Q 2 What should Priya be doing now?

12.

December: I finished my data-imputing job. I started writing my back-ground chapter. I was covering the relationship between India and EU in all the areas. Though I wanted to finish it before I took a break, I have not finished it as I realised that I had underestimated the work. I am not very sure at this point where my research will go and hopefully after 3 months we all will have better and clearer picture of how I should go about it…it seems most of the research students are confused and struggle to define their areas at the early stage, and along the way keep on changing the focus. So this makes me feel that I am not completely off the track and alone in this journey.

Though, I was planning to study and write till 23rd of Dec and spend my Xmas here in Barchester, and then may be go to Bristol for a week to visit my friends, I had to change all my plans as I got persistent emails from my family friends at London to visit them during my break. I was not sure as getting tickets on such a short notice was not a easy task. Knowledge of most of Indian students I knew, were going home did not help the situation at all. I did not have the money and wanted to save my holidays to be able to go home for about 4-5 weeks in the new year sometime.

On the other hand, all of a sudden there was no one in the house and in the school from 12th Dec, as all left for the Xmas break. This made me bit lonely. I could not wait for one more week and fell for the persuasion of my family friends to go to London. I was very tired and needed a break and a complete change, did not want to think about my Ph.D. for sometime. So I left for London for 5 days, spent my time, visiting museums, collecting some good information and resting. Then went to Bristol to visit some friends and to talk to them about problems of Ph.D.

January 2003. Now I am back in Barchester, and trying to catch up my work. I am still waiting to hear from the scholarship office about my graduate assistantship, as it will give me funding, and I will be teaching first year law students. It is bit challenging and exciting at the same time. I am sure it will help me to be able to communicate well in my field and articulate my thoughts. I will also invigilate exams to earn some money.

Q 1 Discuss the problem of student motivation.

Q 2 What should Priya be planning for her second term?

My family had been very supportive. I complained to them about being home-sick and having no friends. My mother gave me courage and asked me to look at these challenges as opportunities to strengthen myself. She told me that I should not take my decision of doing Ph.D. as a commitment for 3 years, but to look at it as 3 days, 3 weeks or 3 months. The knowledge of my family will be there for me if things go wrong was the solid rock in the stormy sea. Though culturally, according to Indian customs and traditions, the society and community puts lots of pressure on them for me to get married.

My friends in India have been very supportive, in addition to them my friends from Bristol doing Ph.D., have been a great support. One of the most important thing I realised over these 3 months is that for Ph.D. one needs to be very highly motivated. There were times when I was very sure and happy and then sometimes I questioned myself as why was I doing my Ph.D. and what do I want from it. Fortunately after talking to my friends, I got to know that most of us go through this phase and it is also part of the Ph.D. to doubt oneself, as it keeps check on one's work and one's goals.

I am still trying to make friends at Barchester. Some of other research students at the department are good, but as I said they have been here for years and so they do not have a special need to make friends. I do not meet too many other students as a normal post-grad might meet, as most of my time is spent in the office. For this very reason, I go to church where I meet some friendly people and I go to International students centre once a week, where some international students come together. I am trying to make friends, which will make me feel more at home and happy, which will support me in my studies and overall development as a human being.

Q 1 Discuss the problem of isolation and ways in which Priya's department and university could be countering it.

Q 2 Is there anything more Priya could be doing about it?

14.

My second term. To begin with I will just give the overall developments or changes during these 4 months, which had a lot of impact on my progress in PhD:

- I made friends and that helped me to settle as I had someone to go and talk out what I felt and gave me a lot of support. I started to go to church very regularly and that gave me a lot of emotional support as well.
- By this time, my family managed to get convinced that this is not just a crazy idea and I was very much sure about the fact that I want to do PhD in England, irrespective of the fact that they were not supporting me financially and it is very difficult for me to support my self and study!
- Funding, this is a tricky area. I have applied to the available funding opportunities. I guess I had explained earlier, as I had a full scholarship for my masters in England, I am debarred from most of the common scholarships! Secondly, I needed to have some written material ready to show to the funding body, I could not completely concentrate on PhD, as I had to work and support and feed myself, and the stress of impending danger of discontinuing my PhD did not help the matters at all. So, right now, I am waiting for some funding to come through and keeping my fingers crossed.

The progress with my PhD:

After the break, I have completely changed the focus and now, I am surer of what I want form the broader views to the most narrow view. I have been reading, thinking and discussing it with my supervisors, colleagues and friends. I had written a chapter, but almost scrapped it and will soon start writing concretely again. As I said I am working on the same area, it gives me new ideas and brings me closer to my focus. I am planning to go into hibernation in May to write up two chapters.

January: I got back from the Christmas break, which I needed very badly. My office was shifted, so I had to get used to new office, office mates and the surrounding area. I had started reading a lot on my PhD, and had reshaped my PhD by now. I had been reading articles and trying to write. I met my supervisors and discussed about how and what I wanted to do. They were supportive and I felt a lot more assured.

Every two weeks I was writing my thoughts and would meet up with my supervisors, they would question me, advise me and encourage me.

February: We had lot of seminars in my department and I met lot of visiting scholars, attended their lectures. Kept on reading and discussing, by this time my supervisors wanted me to write and be sure about where I wanted to go.

I met my boyfriend, through a friend of mine. This was good, as he is from my city. So I could use my mother tongue, discuss politics and share music. This brought me a lot of

emotional support. As I was missing my family and found it very hard and expensive to give them calls. At the same time, this was an emotional stress, as I had not counted on having a relationship and so was shocked at the fact that how much time and emotional care a relationship demands. He is not based where I am, so we see each other every 2-3 weeks for a weekend. So to be fair, I do not spend a lot of time with him.

I shifted to new house. Which has been one of my best decisions since I arrived in Barchester. Not only it is a lot cheaper, but a lot more beautiful house. Gives me more room to move about and brings a lot of peace, which was very necessary to give best to my work/

March: I got a permanent part-time job as a research assistant, 15 hours a week, which was a lot close to my area of PhD, so most of the work I do and did is related to my PhD. It also taught me lots of research skills which are very useful and important for my PhD. This not only solved my problem of funding, but also helped me to get into research whole-heartedly and made my journey into the research group very smooth and gradual. I felt at home and got to know everyone and it helped to strengthen my connection. Now, I could give my best to my work.

I also got offered other job and now I could not take it! Is short, the much needed financial stability was great and I was more relaxed.

Q What new issues have arisen this term?

15.

April: My boyfriend asked me to marry him! And now our families are discussing the whole thing! I had not counted on this. Of-course, I cannot ignore the pressure from my family, friends, community and culture to get married. I am not very sure when I would like to get married. He is very supportive about my PhD and which was good, as my family was not very keen on me not to marry and continue to do my PhD, so even if I decide to continue, they should be fine. As they are convinced that I am not going to sacrifice PhD and marriage for each other. He needs to move to Barchester, get a job and a house and stuff here. Nonetheless, it made me seriously think about my time-management. If I wanted to work, do my PhD and get married, there is no way I could do full time PhD. Unfortunately as an international student I cannot get part-time PhD, but could apply for split-site PhD. So I discussed this with my supervisor, and I will think about it. But one thing I am sure, if I will try to do too many things, I will end up as a master of no trade!

In short, it had been a bumpy ride, but it looks a lot better than the first term. Now, I love the house where I live, got friends who support me, almost got engaged to a nice guy, which not only brings peace to my family but a lot of support to me as well. I got a job, which helps me to support myself and teaches me a lot for my PhD. Though, I have not made a great amount of progress with my PhD, I ought to be realistic, and keep on trying my best, as now I am in much better position to work hard. I want to go home to visit my family, but I have promised my self that I will not do so till I take my up-grade. And that will help me to keep my motivation and add the important factor of clock ticking! As I mentioned, very soon, will go off and write 2 chapters and then can work on them and see what my supervisors think.

Most importantly, they have been great and very supportive. They helped me all the while, from getting my job to deal with my homesickness. I guess they even were little bit more lenient with my deadlines as they knew my pressures. As they were aware that if I had no financial support I could not continue. At the same time, now they make sure that I am working on my PhD!

Q 1 Discuss the conflicting demands on Priya's time. What advice should she be given at this stage?

Q 2 What problems do you foresee arising this term?

16.

Summer term. I am still working part-time as a research assistant in my department, for 15 hours per week.

I had told you earlier that I met someone and as he is Indian and from my city, and my family has been pushing me to come to visit them and make it on some formal level.

They have not met him yet, and I hope they will approve of him once they meet him. Once they approve of him, they will want us to get married as soon as possible, irrespective of the fact that I am in middle of my PhD.

For my family, they say I should think about settling down now, and should prioritise on that, and then try to manage my PhD. That adds into extra family pressure. I could do with one big responsibility at a time. I think PhD is keeping my hands full. I might not be able to handle married life.

Lastly, my boyfriend is based in London. So though I do not spend much time with him, we try to see each other every 3 weeks, and one of us travels. That is additional burden on time and money.

He tries to understand, but is very stressed, as he thinks my parents will decide our future, if they ask him to stop seeing me, it would be very difficult.

Q 1 Discuss the pressures on Priya. Should she seek advice?

Q 2 If she consults them, how should her supervisors respond?

17.

June. Carried on with my job and PhD, and attended and participated in organising an international seminar for one of the projects run at the Centre where I am doing my PhD. [My department has some centres specialising in some fields of law as such.] Though I did not present a paper, it was a good exposure to see international experts and attend their talks and presentations.

I started to write up for my up-grade, due at the end of the academic year, when I am expected to hand in an abstract, research questions, timetable, progress update and a chapter. I started working at it and met my supervisor and started the battle of writing.

July and August: same format continued.

September: took time off from work, as could not handle everything at the same time.

I had to prove my progress in my PhD, otherwise, they would not transfer me to full PhD, as I am still a provisional student like others. This involves a big risk, as I could lose my job, and the only way of sustaining myself and to earn the tuition fees, if I wanted to continue.

Meeting with my supervisor regularly and showing her my written work and again improving it after getting the feedback.

In middle of month, I had a presentation in an international conference for the interviews I did as part of my work. Although it was not directly linked to my PhD, it taught me a lot and I met the experts who were on my reading list!

October: I handed in my research proposal, research questions, progress update, timetable, methodology along with a chapter form my thesis. I will take a viva in middle of the month and then I would be told about the result.

Q 1 Any further comments at this stage?

Q 2 What preparations should be made for the up-grade?

18.

October 15th: I was too nervous, could not speak a sentence without any grammatical mistakes and could not understand what the panel was saying. I just could not do it.

It is very sad and disheartening that I did not manage to show that I have done enough substantial work in right direction, and I am asked to either appeal against the decision or reapply and prove that how this time I could make sure that I deliver what is expected of me. It seems I am not given a second chance, and all I want is time to be able to work and prove I could do this. I am feeling very sad, as I have done too many things to be able to do this, but looks like I have failed.

I have seen my supervisor. The other one I hardly get to see. But my main one is very helpful. She is trying to find a way out, and hopefully get me some time to try one more time. She also said that I have good grounds to make an appeal and most of the appeals are successful.

But she is worried about how I might cope if given time and asked to work more and to take the up-grade again, and not make it. All I feel right now is to get a chance and prove that I can do it. In short they are thinking if, on my grounds [family problems and financial problems], they could give me some time and make me take the up-grade again. I hope that happens, and then I can work harder this time around and make sure I get it right.

At the same time I am very well aware, that I will have to carry on working part-time for financial reasons, and I need double the time of an English student to be able to write, [maybe my writing style is lot different]. I just hope I can develop it and get it up to the mark.

I will try to reapply and hopefully give one more try, as I cannot give up hopes of doing my PhD.

It seems, my case is very right to show, how difficult it is for an international student who has no funding, no family support, to think of doing PhD in the UK.

Right now, I am very confused and frustrated. Secondly, I am not very well and flying home in 3 days time, tired and sad. I am flying off India to meet up with my family and take a break. I hope to come back to start from scratch.

🙂 Don't cry because it came to an end, smile because it happened

19.

Letters received by Priya:

Dear Priya,

I attach a letter setting out the decision of yesterday's panel with reasons. I will put a copy of this letter in your pigeonhole for you to collect. As I advised yesterday, this means that you cannot carry on with your phd. You do have a right to appeal against this decision, and you will find details of this procedure in the student research handbook should you decide to take this course of action. However, after much discussion, the panel members still feel this was the right decision. You asked me for some advice on different issues. Firstly, as you are not re-registered, you are no longer classed as a student of the University. It would not be possible to suspend your studies due to personal grounds as the decision is that you should not continue with your phd. For advice about your visa, you will find International Student Office will be able to provide this. If you are employed by the Research Centre, then you need to speak to Lucy about this, and again International Office will hopefully be able to advise you about work permits, etc. As with any applicant, you would be able to re-apply to do a phd / MPhil etc in the normal way. However, I think you would have difficulty in gaining acceptance unless you could make a really strong case (with evidence) as to why / how things would be different the second time around. An application for distance supervision is only usually considered for those students who need little help or supervision as it means you could be away from the University for 9 months out of a year, and although we would have a partner Institution, the responsibility is still on us to ensure students are making good progress. If you choose to make a new application, your proposal will also need to be more focussed and have some underpinning theoretical framework upon which your socio-legal research will conceptualised. I am sorry to be the bearer of this bad news, and my thoughts are with you at this difficult time.

Dear Priya,

Many thanks for coming to the panel meeting yesterday. As I explained at the time, I'm sorry but we decided not to recommend your upgrade to phd status. After consideration of the documents you submitted and your viva yesterday, we felt that you had made insufficient progress as a full-time research student in terms of:

- Conceptualising your thesis and research questions, and developing an underpinning theoretical framework for your thesis;
- Showing awareness of relevant methodological issues and developing your methodology;
- Presenting your writing to sufficient academic standard;
- Demonstrating sufficient critical analysis in the work submitted.

Although your project on looking at the motivational factors of the migration of highly skilled Indian women has many interesting aspects to it, and has the potential to make an original contribution to this field, the project as it stands is too wide in scope and needs

further focus. As a panel, we did discuss the option of asking you to re-submit after a further period but unfortunately decided that the work submitted fell quite a way short of the quality required for a phd upgrade.

I am aware that this decision will be a major set-back for you. You will wish to consider your options and both I and Lucy will be happy to speak to you further about these.

Q 1 What advice would you give to Priya?

Q 2 To whom should she turn?

Team task

One the acetate/s provided list your suggestions on

1. **institutional infrastructure for international programmes**
2. **recruitment and admission of international doctoral students**
3. **departmental recruitment, admission and induction procedures**
4. **supervisors**
5. **monitoring student progress**

20. Epilogue

November 2003.

Dear John

Since I arrived to India, things moved quickly, Vikram was also in India and our families met and approved of our decision of getting married. So we got engaged on 26th of Oct in presence and with blessing of our families. This was such a relief, as I had been very worried. Of course, my family wanted us to get married as soon as possible, and so it will be very soon. [It depends upon Vikram's job, and when would he be able to get a leave; currently he is back in London for his job.]

My family wanted me to spend some time with them before I get married and leave for UK. So I will not be able to continue with my studies at Barchester immediately… as I am asked to restart. I do want to continue my doctoral studies, but now, it might be more difficult, so I am thinking about this….

That means after marriage [which might be in coming 6 months] I will move to London, and will have to start from scratch to access if I could do my doctorate and to look for job and of course handle the teething problems of marriage…..but I will cross that bridge when I get there. Currently, I am very happy, and trying to make my family and friends happy, by doing what they expect me to do.

Hopefully I will be able to sharpen other skills, which I will need in my future married-life….and get all the advice from my family.

I will keep in touch and hopefully will see you when I come back to the UK.

I hope things are going well with you.

Priya