SP interview transcript

Hi, thanks so much for agreeing to do this interview. Shall we get started? Will you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I’m Sargamoy Phukan. And I'm from India and from India, I’m from Assam, that’s my state. And I have a background in climate science and policy and I'm working on my PhD on Citizen science and environmental monitoring. In India. So I want to look into how citizen science can be promoted or enhanced in India and look into the barriers and challenges and opportunities that is present in India for environmental monitoring, so that it can help in assisting and accounting for the Sustainable Development Goals.

That’s really interesting, thank you. So what did you study previously to get to the point where you're doing your PhD?

Yeah, so my bachelors is in geology and I changed into climate science and policy for my masters, which I did from Dehli School of Advanced Studies. So that school or University specialised only in sustainable development, so we had we had courses like from engineering like Sustainable engineering, Urban Development and then I was part of the, like, I was in the group working straight on work on climate science and policy. So after that I worked in a couple of NGOs and from there actually my whole idea. Came into being like why citizen scientists required and how it can help in sustainable development.

Amazing, that's like quite the journey to get here, isn't it?

It has been quite the journey

Okay I need the final bit about tell me about yourself and I think it's the most important question. What's your favourite colour?

Either blue or red.

So what attracted you to the Stockholm Environment Institute in the 1st place? What made you apply?

It was about the amount of work that they have done in this field so they have a very good name and the quality of work. So they have done brilliant amount of work like starting from the ideas, even like the planetary boundary concept which was started by Rockstrom from who was one of the directors of SEI. So like ever since I've been a big fan of them following their work so I thought why not try out to be a PhD student there. So I just applied.

Did it live up to the expectation studying here?

Til now it’s been quite good. It's amazing my supervisor are Quite amazing. They have a lot of ideas and yes. It is quite a good thing that I have thought of coming here.

So what has your experience studying been like?

Well, in terms of. Because I started during the covid periods so I've not met a lot of people, but. In terms of studying has been a good experience, well I also come from India so there's a lot of difference between our teaching style and the one you have here. But the teachers are very helpful they give us a lot of ideas also. And they also listen to our ideas. So we can work a lot on this, so they actually help to grow a hybrid kind of ideas which makes a lot of sense. So I think it's a very good experience here from the professors.

So has most of your research been done virtually?

 It has been done virtually yes. But I hope like in a few days I would go to the department.

How do you think the teaching is adapted to being online? Have you had a good experience with everything online?

It's fine, I don't know how other people, other students, experience because they might be from undergrad or post grads. But as a PhD student. its quite Easy to work, virtually because it’s mostly discussions and we don't have long classes. easier for us.

Yeah, so looking back at the time that you have studied here, which from the sounds of things hasn't been very long. What has been the stand out experience for you? If you look back, what's the one thing that you can remember immediately?

My professors helping out with, you know, giving out like you can attend this kind of conferences or this kind of summer schools or something like that. So this help would not have come anywhere else. But like where I have expressed from. But here they have helped me a lot to get myself exposed to a lot of things. Which I like.

Sounds really good. If you had to summarise these Stockholm Environment Institute in your experience in three words, what would they be?

A very good learning experience. It's awesome, it is awesome.

That was definitely over 3 words.

It is awesome that three words.

 Okay okay yeah, I like that. Okay so the final thing we're going to do is if you were talking to someone who is thinking about applying here, what would you say?

Um I would say At first it's very important for those people who have their research interest in this area and if they have, then directly approach professors and the researchers here. So they are quite helpful and quite, and they reply back pretty quickly so. I would say that. If they have a research interest I would definitely say apply after talking with professors.

Definitely. Would you have any advice for them?

Yeah, they should have a very clear idea about what they are applying for, not like clear as in what they’re going to do but what they want to do their research on and not be vague about it and. This will actually. This is the most important thing I have seen. Like I've actually talked with a number of people and the most important thing which I've seen is that they are very vague about what they want to do. So be clear about what they want to do and this will help them to connect with the professor who is working on that certain research area.

That's really good advice. Thank you very much. That is all of the questions I have for you. Is there anything else you think is important for anyone watching these? Or anything else you just like to add?

It's fine, I think your question have covered a lot of things.

Thank you well, if that's it then I will let you get back on your important PhD research. Thank you very much.

Thank you so much.

Thank you, bye.