

# EMBEDDIGNITY

## THANDORA

Our Newsletter is here!

Thandora is a drum used by a messenger in the pre-modern Indian society to announce a message to the community.

[WEBSITE](#)

## Our Pioneering Research on the Aftermath of the 2020 Boohoo Scandal in the UK



Our in-depth research into the aftermath of the 2020 Boohoo scandal sheds light on the consequences of framing labour exploitation issues through a modern slavery lens. Focused on modern slavery allegations in the UK's garment industry, the study reveals how this approach has left workers and suppliers in Leicester unemployed, with limited support to recover.



The findings are accessible as [reports in four languages](#) and as a [media article](#), ensuring accessibility to diverse audiences. The reports have seen significant engagement, with **over 4000 downloads across English, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Hindi**.

## Our Fieldwork

Over the course of the three-year project, we have successfully completed fieldwork in four key sites—garment and software development industries in both India and the UK.

In the UK, with the assistance of research associate Dr Nandita Dutta, we completed fieldwork between April and December 2023. This involved conducting 77 interviews with workers in Leicester's garment industry, including workers, civil society stakeholders, auditors, designers, state officials, and suppliers. Additionally, we carried out 27 interviews in the UK's software industry, engaging with both employees and managers. We are currently in the process of writing papers based on these findings. Stay tuned!

In India, with the invaluable help of research assistants Ishwarya Thyagarajan, Sowmya Balasubramaniam and Sundara Babu Nagappan, we conducted qualitative fieldwork in the garment industry across Tirupur, Chennai, and Coimbatore in July and August 2022, with some additional interviews in November 2022. A total of 137 interviews were collected, with migrant workers, local workers, employers, contractors, government officials, and civil society stakeholders.

In India's software development industry, we conducted 109 interviews, engaging employees, managers, civil society stakeholders, and government representatives.

Based on this data, **we are preparing three reports** to be released in the coming months: one on the nature of dignity and indignity experienced by software development professionals in India and another on the state of the garment industry in India regarding workers' notions of respect and dignity.

Stay tuned for these upcoming reports!

## We Welcome...



Dr. Divya Tyagi has joined our project as a postdoctoral researcher. Her research interests include dignity at work, discrimination in the workplace, neoliberal business schools and academic lives, leadership transitions, and AI in human resource management.

## We Have Been Out and About!

Over the past year, our team has had the privilege of sharing our work at prestigious academic platforms worldwide. In May 2024, we participated in the 18th **Organization Studies Workshop** in Greece, followed by the **Academy of Management Annual Meeting** in Chicago (August 2024). We also contributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Caste, Business and Society held at the University of Bath in June 2024, among other notable gatherings.

In addition to these presentations, Professor Vivek Soundararajan was invited to distinguished events. In September 2024, he participated at the Connecticut/Baden-Württemberg Human Rights Research Consortium at the **Max Planck Society's Harnack Haus in Berlin** and shared insights at the **Re-Structure Lab at Stanford University in October 2024**.

These opportunities underscore our ongoing commitment to advancing impactful scholarship and engaging with global academic and practitioner communities.

## Stakeholder Consultation in Leicester

In July 2024, we organized a stakeholder consultation in Leicester to foster dialogue around the findings of our latest report and explore pathways for addressing challenges in the UK garment supply chain. This event provided an opportunity to collectively reflect on recent developments and chart a way forward for the industry.

The consultation brought together 31 participants, representing a diverse mix of perspectives, including civil society organizations, council officials, suppliers, and workers.



## Global Early-Career Accelerator For Representation (GEAR)

In 2024, we proudly launched the inaugural cohort of GEAR (Global Early-Career Accelerator for Representation), a program dedicated to enhancing the representation of researchers from low- and middle-income (LMI) countries in the field of business and society. The program garnered significant global interest, with 50 applicants. Ultimately, 19 scholars were selected to participate in the virtual program.

As part of this initiative, two participants were invited to the School of Management in 2025 at the University of Bath to further develop their papers for publication. This milestone underscores our commitment to fostering inclusivity and amplifying diverse voices in academic research.

Testimonials from the past cohort and details about the next round of the program can be found [here](#).

# 2<sup>ND</sup> Global Conference on Caste, Business and Society

This year, we had the honour of co-organizing and hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Conference on Caste, Business, and Society at the School of Management, University of Bath. The event featured a thought-provoking **keynote address by Professor Surinder Jodhka** from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, setting the stage for engaging discussions on this critical topic.

We are already looking ahead and planning for the next instalment of the conference in 2025—at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford from 21-23 July 2025.

## Selected Recent Publications

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. **Towards a Systematic Approach for Improving Working Conditions in Global Supply Chains**  
By: Soundararajan V, Miriam MW, Crane A, Agarwal P, & Shetty H  
Journal: Academy of Management Annals.

[Read the article](#)

2. **Coping with Personhood Limbo: Personhood Anchoring Work Among Undocumented Workers in Italy**  
By: Derakhshan R, Soundararajan V, Agarwal P, & Crane A  
Journal: Human Relations

[Read the article](#)

3. **Caste, Social Capital, and Precarity of Labour Market Intermediaries**  
By: Soundararajan V, Sharma G, & Bapuji H  
Journal: Organization Studies, 2023, 45(7): 961-985

[Read the article](#)

4. **The Dark Side of the Cascading Compliance Model in Global Value Chains**  
By: Soundararajan V  
Journal: Journal of Industrial and Business Economics, 2023, 50(2): 209-218.

[Read the article](#)

5. **Organizational Engagement With Poverty: A Review and Reorientation**  
By: Soundararajan V, Sahasranamam S, Rogerson M, Bapuji H, Spence L, & Shaw J  
Journal: Journal of Management

[Read the article](#)

6. **Hybrid (Un)freedom in Worker Hostels in Garment Supply Chains**  
By: Crane A, Soundararajan V, Bloomfield M J, LeBaron G, & Spence L J  
Journal: Human Relations, 2022, 75(10): 1928-1960.

[Read the article](#)

A full list of all journal articles is available [here](#).

#### **JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIALS**

Professor Vivek Soundararajan was part of a guest editorial team editing following special issues.

1. Academy of Management Learning & Education: **Addressing Socioeconomic Inequalities, 2021-2024.**

Arun Kumar, Hari Bapuji, Vivek Soundarajan, Tine Köhler, Rafael Alcadipani, Mette Morsing, Diego Coraiola.

[Read the editorial here.](#)

2. Journal of Management: **Invisible inequalities: Exploring hidden differences among individuals in the workplace, 2020-2023**

Hari Bapuji, Gokhan Ertug and Jason Shaw, Vivek Soundarajan

[Read the editorial here.](#)

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