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Member Spotlight: Ekjyot K. Saini, Ph.D.

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Why did you decide to choose Developmental Science as a course of study or career?

My interest in developmental science stems from a lifelong curiosity about how people function within their environments. Growing up in Queens, New York, as the child of Indian immigrants among peers who were also navigating multiple sociocultural contexts, I witnessed firsthand the diversity of developmental outcomes among children from seemingly similar backgrounds. I was especially intrigued by why some children thrived socioemotionally, cognitively, and physically, while others faced greater challenges—a phenomenon I later learned is called multifinality. This curiosity led me to explore the roles of stress and self-regulation in shaping family processes and children's well-being. My interdisciplinary interests in human biological processes and behavior ultimately drew me to developmental science, as it offers a unique lens to

examine the complex interplay between individual functioning, family and neighborhood contexts, and bioregulatory processes across time.

What is your best SRCD memory?

I've always enjoyed attending SRCD and it always allows to learn about all the exciting work in our field as well as to reconnect with friends and colleagues who I've met on this journey in the developmental science. Some of my favorite memories are from Special Topics Meetings which are smaller conferences and allow one to forge new friendships. At the *Boys, Babies, and Men of Color* meeting in Tampa, FL, a tropical storm limited our ability to explore the area, but the lively social events more than made up for it, allowing us to bond and form new connections. Similarly, at the *Constructing the Other* conference in Puerto Rico, I discovered that many SRCD members are surprisingly talented karaoke singers!

What advice would you give to a Graduate student beginning their Ph.D. studies in Developmental Science or a related field?

Upon reflecting on my relatively recent Ph.D., I would offer a couple words of wisdom and perspective. It's key to remember that your journey through a doctoral program may not look the same as those around you, and that is okay! Doctoral programs and cohorts may feel like a group trip that you have planned - there is an itinerary of essential things that you need to do, schedules to adhere to, but you also may want (or need) more time to explore things at a different pace than those in your group or even veer off into completely new adventures. Similarly, I would suggest being open to learning about topics and methods that you did not think you would be interested in when you started the journey, as well as investing time in developing relationships with your academic peers and mentors. Ultimately, this journey is about cultivating what you need in order to pursue the kind of work that you want to do and having the supportive network to sustain you.

Why did you join the Asian Caucus and how does it facilitate connection among members all year long?

I've been keenly aware of the underrepresentation of research and researchers of Asian descent in developmental science and joined the Asian Caucus when I attended my first SRCD Biennial meeting. The Asian Caucus is important to me because it allowed for me to find a group of researchers who focused on Asian populations and families, as well as those with experiences similar to my own. Additionally, South Asians are an underrepresented population in developmental science, and being a member of the caucus

has allowed for me to meet fellow South Asian researchers who may be the only South Asian individuals in their departments or research areas. The Asian Caucus provides a community to foster connections with others around the globe who are deeply committed to the well-being of minoritized or marginalized children and families.

As a member of the steering committee, I am deeply committed to providing support and programming to help emerging scholars and increase representation of Asian and Asian Americans in developmental sciences. We have an active listserv and are working to provide greater resources to our members, such as webinars, throughout the year. I also appreciate being able to work with the other caucuses to help create space and advocate for the needs of our members.

Visit the

ASIAN CAUCUS WEBSITE

to learn about benefits, networking opportunities, and more!