

Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University in collaboration with OKD Institute of Social Change and Development call for papers for international Conference on

*Land, Labour and Nation in Contemporary South Asia:
Claims and Contestation*

Dates : 12, 13, 14 February, 2020.

Claims and contestations over land and the right to labour on it, is not a new phenomenon in South Asia or any other part of the globe. However, colonial cartographic exercises, mainly targeted towards excessive accumulation of revenue have had serious implications in both the state making and nation making processes in the post colonial politics of the region. The imposition of colonial laws and policies on the land and its people affected many social and political notions, practices and ties that nations and communities shared otherwise. This apart, the partition of the Indian sub-continent more than once has shaped and re-shaped our imaginations and considerations of 'Us' and 'them'. Urvashi Bhutalia's (1998) seminal work on partition brings forth how land is much more than a physical, geographical category and how even as an imagined entity it could affect our everyday lives and performances of citizenship in significant ways. And therefore contestations over land should be understood as not merely contest over resources alone but also as contestations over memories, shared sufferings and one's sense of belongingness to a nation.

The need for opportunities of appearance as a significant component of one's political existence and being has been emphasised upon by many political thinkers. The ability to make appearances and act makes one's life politically significant or vibrant. The ability to give, express and contribute labour is one way through which citizens makes their appearances in a political community. In a certain sense, in the age of the capital and within the framework of the modern state, labour can also be seen as something that makes lives grievable and valuable (Butler, 2009) and its inability leads to socio-political precariousness and vulnerabilities. But many a times because of political phenomenon and policies, one is not allowed or is not left with ample opportunities to make their

appearances and labour/work in a particular political context. Many a times, these inability is also the result of perceived fears of exclusion, rejection, humiliation or violence. In other times, it could also be the result of a policy framed and formulated.

The nation in South Asia is complex assemblage of identities that manifests through overlapping power structures anchored around gender, labour and land relations. A region that has seen ascendance of the dominant narratives of 'ethno-territoriality'- both as a concept of groups as being bounded to a specific territory and as a means of control over resources and people, there is an increasing need to conceptualise on the interconnections through which the nation states in the region continues to function. Beginning with a 'colonial bio-cultural representation' to the post-colonial geo-political manifestations, there is a need to critically interrogate the available frameworks to understand the region. Especially when the region is poised for significant transformation at the crucial juncture of regional policies of collaborations and cooperations, the nation in South Asia is likely to go through a period of interesting claims and contestations.

Themes and Sub-themes:

- The region as a projection : nostalgic pulls and re-imagining the future
- The region and its performativities: tribe, caste, sexualities
- The region as an ecological plot : interconnections and possibilities
- The region and its anxieties/aspirations: Migration, displacements, land question
- The region and its 'other' : The citizen, the migrant, the indigene, the refugee
- The region as a borderland : fluidities and rigidities
- The region and the question of 'labour': practices, policies and institutions

Please send your abstracts on papers or panels (maximum 500 words) to :
duconference2020@gmail.com or **amritapgogoi@dibru.ac.in**.

The deadline for submission of abstract is 10th October, 2019. Contributors of selected abstracts will be communicated by 30th October, 2019. Full paper of not more than 5000 words should be submitted by the selected participants by the 15th of December, 2019.

Travel and local cost for outstation participants will be borne by the organisers. However, we will appreciate if candidates are able to manage independent funding for their travel.

Co-ordinators :

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