



**Canada India Research  
Centre for Learning  
and Engagement**

**CIRCLE Graduate South Asia Conference  
November 13 and 14 (virtual)**

<https://canadaindiaresearch.ca/events/2024/11/graduate-south-asia-conference-2024>

***Organized by***

Canada India Research Centre for Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)  
University of Guelph

**Day 1: Wednesday, November 13 | 8:00 a.m. – 1:40 p.m. EST / 6:30 p.m. – 12:10 a.m. IST**

**Opening Session | 8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. EST | 6:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Sharada Srinivasan, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

- Welcome: Dilshan Fernando, PhD Candidate in Sociology & International Development
- Opening Remarks: Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies), University of Guelph

**Session 1 | Public Health & Healthcare Systems | 8:20 a.m. – 9:20 a.m. EST | 6:50 p.m. – 7:50 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Ataharul Chowdhury, Associate Professor, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development**

1. Counting Disease and Death: The Social Processes of Medical Certification of Cause of Deaths in India | Bijendra Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
2. Pioneers in Healthcare: Women's Medical Education in Colonial Uttar Pradesh | Sakshi Pandey, University of Lucknow, India
3. Health Security in Indian During COVID-19 Pandemic | Anurag Acharya, South Asian University, India

**Session 2 | Violence, Gender, and Representation in Media | 9: 25 a.m. – 10:55 a.m. EST | 7:55 a.m. – 9:25 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Priyanka Pundir, Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology**

1. Animal Instincts: Violence and its Representation of the Partition of British India 1947 | Arijit Nandi, McMaster University, Canada
2. Where do I go: Violence and Support Network of Women in Specific Occupations in Kolkata, India | Srimanjori Guha, Centre for Development Studies, India
3. Video Surveillance as a Policing Technology: Narratives from the Delhi Police | Procheta Mukherjee, South Asian University, India
4. Childfree Heroines and Reproductive Autonomy: Unplanned Pregnancy Narratives of Married Women in Indian Cinema | Sushree Routray, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India
5. Exploring the Connection between Parental Education and Their Teens Aggression | Archana Kumari, Patliputra University, India

**Session 3 | Agriculture, Climate Change and Indigenous Communities | 11: 00 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. EST | 9:30 p.m. – 10: 45 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Felix Arndt, Professor and John F. Wood Chair in Entrepreneurship, Department of Management**

1. Role of Actors and Network Centralities for Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture Technologies in Bangladesh | Md Rezaul Karim, University of Kassel, Germany
2. Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on Building Climate Change Resilience: A

Case of Rajasthan in India | Satish Macwan, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India

3. Bhotiya Tribe: Navigating Life in the Changed Realities of the Himalayas | Neelam Joshi, University of Lucknow, India

4. Facilitating Development or Rights of Tribes: The Paradox of Legislative and Policy Frameworks in Sikkim | Nanuma Subba, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

**Session 4 | Class and Social Stratification | 12:20 p.m. – 1:35 p.m. EST | 10:50 p.m. – 12:05 a.m. IST**

**Moderator: Bharat Punjabi, Instructor, University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy**

1. The Colonial Hangover of the Gentlemen's Clubs in Kolkata, India: An ethnographic study | Shreyashi Ganguly, York University, Canada

2. Public Service Delivery and the Administrators: A Study on Challenges, Strategies, and Implications in Rajasthan (India) | Akhil Bhardwaj, Punjab University, India

3. Power, Gender, and Class in India: A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Patriarchal Oppression in Select Narratives | Md Nasir Hossain, School of Sciences (English), Malla Reddy University, India

4. (Un)Becoming in Transit: Interrogating the Gendered Spaces of Informality on a Kolkata Local Train | Mahashewta Bhattacharya, University of British Columbia, Canada

**Day 2: Thursday, November 14 | 8:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. EST/ 6:30 p.m. – 10: 50 p.m. IST**

**Session 5 | Migration, Diaspora, & Postcolonial Identity | 8:00 a.m. – 9: 15 a.m. EST | 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Stuart McCook, Assistant Vice-President International**

1. Artistic and fiscal addition of settlers in Canada | Sunanda Das, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India
2. Canada: Immigrants Bearing the Brunt | \*Akierah Binns, University of Guelph, Canada, Dr. Nita Chhinzer, University of Guelph, and \*Khushi Surana, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
3. Silent Voices: Tales from the Borderland of India | Arindam Goswami, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, India
4. Exploring Postcolonial Mythic Spaces: Reading Paratextual Illustration in Chitra Divakaruni's Novels | Afroj Jahan, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India

**Keynote | 9:20 a.m. – 9:55 a.m. EST | 7: 50 p.m. – 8:25 a.m. IST**

**Moderator: Sharada Srinivasan, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

The Politics and Practices of Wastewater Surveillance and Governance: Global Lessons from South Asia | Josie Wittmer, Assistant Professor in Geography, Environment & Sustainability, School of Science and the Environment, Memorial University

**Session 6 | Gender and Caste Reassertion in Cinema | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. EST | 8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: John Walsh, Associate Professor and Director, School of Languages and Literatures**

1. Contesting Caste: Dalit Assertion in Contemporary Indian Cinema | Somnath Waghmare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India
2. Subverting and Reinventing the 'Mass hero': Reading the Performance of Stardom in Tamil New Wave Cinema | Mohamed Ilyas Raffiudeen, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India
3. (Un)learning Caste and Gender: Reconstructing Dalit Masculinities in Contemporary Telugu Cinema | Bhagya Shree Nadamala, Indian Institute of Technology, Patna, India

**Session 7 | Public Issues | 11:05a.m. – 12:20 p.m. EST | 8: 35 p.m. – 10: 50 p.m. IST**

**Moderator: Guneet Kaur, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

1. Youth Aspirations and Higher Education: An Analysis of Public University Students in India | Disha Sharma, Dr B R Ambedkar University Delhi, India
2. A Vision for Bharat-Canada Energy Cooperation | Sumit Kumar, Central University of Haryana, India
3. Understanding How Informal Water Networks Function in Accessing Water in Peri-Urban Small Town in India | Isaiamudhu SS, University of Hyderabad, India
4. Local Working of Patents in India: A Legal Analysis | Vivek Kumar, Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta, India

## Speakers

[Ben Bradshaw](#), Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies), University of Guelph

[Dilshan Fernando](#), PhD Candidate in Sociology & International Development, University of Guelph

[Josie Wittmer](#), Assistant Professor in Geography, Environment & Sustainability, School of Science and the Environment, Memorial University

## Moderators

[Felix Arndt](#), Professor and John F. Wood Chair in Entrepreneurship, Department of Management

[Ataharul Chowdhury](#), Associate Professor, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

[Guneet Kaur](#), Assistant Professor, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences

[Stuart McCook](#), Assistant Vice-President International

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[Bharat Punjabi](#), Instructor, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy

[Sharada Srinivasan](#), Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

[John Walsh](#), Associate Professor and Director, School of Languages and Literatures

## Abstracts

**Day 1: Wednesday, November 13, 2024**

### Session 1 | Public Health & Healthcare Systems

**1. Counting Disease and Death: The Social Processes of Medical Certification of Cause of Deaths in India**

Bijendra Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD) statistics are very important for public health scholars and policy makers for it reflects the distribution of fatal diseases and other causes in a population group. This paper will try to explore the social processes of generation of MCCD statistics in India starting with the role of physicians and other medical and non-medical personnel involved in assignment of cause of death in the process of death certification. By using the ethnomethodological framework of sociology, this paper will try to understand the various factors involved in decision making by physicians and other personnel regarding the assignment of causes of death in different social settings.

**2. Pioneers in Healthcare: Women's Medical Education in Colonial Uttar Pradesh**

Sakshi Pandey, University of Lucknow, India

The establishment of female medical colleges in colonial Uttar Pradesh was a significant step forward for women's healthcare and education, driven by advocates for women's rights and health. These institutions emerged in the late 19th century with the aim of training female practitioners to address the need for women healthcare providers in a society where access to male doctors was restricted due to seclusion norms. Despite these noble intentions, the initiative encountered significant obstacles, including societal resistance based on traditional gender roles and inadequate educational infrastructure. Additionally, the combined forces of imperialism and local patriarchy marginalized women in the medical field, complicating their professional development. However, the creation of these institutions laid an important foundation for gender equity in healthcare, even as the fight for improved education and greater acceptance continued. The training provided by these institutions enabled women to achieve financial independence and earn professional respect, thereby challenging traditional gender roles.

**3. Health Security in Indian During COVID-19 Pandemic**

Anurag Acharya, South Asian University, India

The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented number of pandemics and epidemics within just two decades, underscoring the critical importance of health security. The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed the inadequacies of current mainstream approaches to health security, which have failed to protect populations from severe health crises. Despite the prioritization of health by both state and non-state actors, contemporary health policy trends have not succeeded in enhancing the security of individuals. Furthermore, neoliberal economic policies, which are historically specific to our era and have permeated every aspect of life, have significantly

influenced the framing of health security and policy-making. The paper has taken the case of the COVID-19 pandemic in India. It has focused on India's healthcare and vaccine institutions and how these two sectors were affected by neoliberalism, ultimately affecting health security in India during the pandemic. The paper has examined the impact of neoliberalism on health security and health policy formulation by state and non-state actors, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Session 2 | Violence, Gender & Representation in Media**

### **1. Animal Instincts: Violence and its Representation of the Partition of British India 1947**

Arijit Nandi, McMaster University, Canada

The 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent is an event that is incapable of being addressed in a holistic manner within the confines of a single narrative. Narratives on the Partition, both institutional and popular, attest to the necessity of looking at it as an event that holds multiple connotations in the public imagination. The implications of the Partition on the lives of people are simply overwhelming: it is estimated that somewhere between 12 million and 17 million people were displaced, a million people died and seventy-five thousand women abducted. Likewise, both literary and filmic narratives on the Partition grapple with the issue of representability of the socio-historical complexity of the moment. Deepa Mehta's film *Earth*, which is based upon the Partition of the Punjab province, struggles to recreate the violence within the socio-historical dynamics of Partition/Independence. This paper argues that the film's explicit depiction of violence without contextualizing it within the power relations in society leads to the assumption that the Partition was a disruptive event that breaks apart the harmonious communal ties that existed in colonial-era Punjab. Violence in *Earth* is a grotesque aberration: incapable of being located within the course of history.

### **2. Where do I go: Violence and Support Network of Women in Specific Occupations in Kolkata, India**

Srimanjori Guha, Centre for Development Studies, India

The study focuses on the different forms of support networks available in the face of violence for women engaged in or entering into domestic work, driving and sex work in Kolkata. Women workers situated in an urban area with diverse occupational identities can access different forms of kin and non-kin networks, which shape the extent of support and control imposed by such ties during domestic and workspace violence. Narratives highlight that while women primarily reach out to their kin networks for support, it can be limiting in the sense that they do not enable women to resist or question such violence. On the other hand, various institutional and informal non-kin networks formed through participating in diverse occupations and training programmes in the metropolitan city can be crucial in the expansion of women's social space which effectively contributes towards questioning and resisting violence within the existing power hierarchy.

### **3. Video Surveillance as a Policing Technology: Narratives from the Delhi Police**

Procheta Mukherjee, South Asian University, India

In policing, visual can be of great importance. Carceral mechanisms, from rogue galleries to

bertillonage system, consist of some elements of visual in them. While there are numerous usages of cameras, its role in the policing institution remains pivotal. Historically, police photography was used to recognise delinquents and repeat offenders, but today, it has been replaced by a more evolved technology. Video Surveillance technology or Close Circuit Television System (CCTV) has revolutionized the policing institution in terms of its ability to prevent and solve crime by apprehending criminals, conducting complicated investigations, collecting and presenting evidence etc. In an attempt to understand how CCTV is used as a policing technology, this paper engages in an ethnographic study of police stations in Delhi.

#### **4. Childfree Heroines and Reproductive Autonomy: Unplanned Pregnancy Narratives of Married Women in Indian Cinema**

Sushree Routray, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India

The institution of motherhood in India is intertwined with a powerful legitimizing language of naturalization that positions the 'heterosexual family' as the essential foundation of society. This supposed natural order is characterized by heteronormativity, patriarchy, and a clear hierarchy, with marriage serving as the sole pathway to its legitimacy. While mainstream Indian cinema continues to trumpet the 'deficiencies' of childlessness rather than the 'affirmations' of childfreeness, a select few films have dared to challenge this dominant narrative. The paper investigates the depiction of motherhood and reproductive agency within Indian cinema. It highlights that Bollywood's portrayal of pregnancy, abortion, and childlessness in married women often links womanhood to motherhood. However, regional films like Sara's (2021) and Ammu (2022) challenge these norms by showcasing married women who assert control over their reproductive choices, rejecting the idea that motherhood is their inevitable role. These films promote a reconfiguration of maternity as a deliberate choice rather than an inherent duty. Although societal acknowledgment as a mother often hinges on a woman's marital status as the institution of motherhood remains closely tied to heteronormative marriage in the Indian subcontinent, these movies separate pregnancy from its traditional role as a marker of womanhood and marital fulfilment.

#### **5. Exploring the Connection between Parental Education and Their Teens Aggression**

Archana Kumari, Patliputra University, India

This empirical study investigates the role of parent's education levels on the differences and relationship between their adolescent children's aggression. The sample consists of 100 adolescents with an age range of 13 to 18 years old. The participants belong to various high schools in Nalanda District. Parental education was recorded by asking for the highest educational qualification of any of the parents from each participant. The Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire assessed aggression. Data analysis employed one-way ANOVA and a Pearson correlation to explore the differences and relationship between parental education levels and their adolescent children's aggression. The findings indicate a significant difference in aggression among adolescents across different parental education levels. Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was observed between parental education levels and their teen's aggression. It suggests that higher parental education is linked to lower aggression in adolescent children. These results emphasize the importance of parental education in shaping their teen's behavior and highlight the need for interventions to support parents with lower educational backgrounds in reducing their teen's aggression.



## Session 3 | Agriculture, Climate Change & Indigenous Communities

### 1. **Role of Actors and Network Centralities for Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture Technologies in Bangladesh**

Md Rezaul Karim, University of Kassel, Germany

This study aims to unravel the intricate network measures underlying the diffusion and adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) technologies. By conducting personal interviews with both Common Interest Group (CIG) and non-CIG farmers, the researcher gathers rich data on the key actors involved in the diffusion process in the northern Bangladesh. The data analysis for the network visualization was done by Gephi software. Central actors within these networks emerge as influential figures, playing pivotal roles in disseminating knowledge and catalyzing adoption among their peers. Active and frequent communication with leaders, early adopters, and lead farmers identified as central actors driving CSA technology diffusion and adoption. Nevertheless, network of farmers is particularly relevant in case of adoption decision for a particular CSA technology, as incentives to use a new crop variety or a fertilizer or a practice are more compelling, if they are connected to potential peers in their network. The results highlight the role of social networks in shaping farmer's adoption decisions, as connections to influential peers and access to relevant information significantly influence the CSA adoption. Overall, the study suggests the need for targeted interventions that leverage existing social structures to promote CSA uptake effectively.

### 2. **Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on Building Climate Change Resilience: A Case of Rajasthan in India**

Satish Macwan, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India

The study aims to evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on climate change resilience in the Western Dry Region of Rajasthan. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Adopting a multi-stage stratified random sampling method, 232 households were selected from two distinct categories of blocks: Group A with high MGNREGA expenditure and Group B with low expenditure. The findings reveal that MGNREGA has significantly enhanced the livelihood capitals of communities, particularly during climate crisis such as droughts, low rainfall, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific MGNREGA initiatives, including Commons restoration, water conservation, and agricultural land development, have profoundly impacted critical resources such as fodder, water, and soil nutrients, positively influencing agricultural yields, livestock production, and Commons productivity. The composite household resilience score, derived from 20 indicators spanning five types of livelihood capitals, indicates that 40% of households exhibit a 'high' degree of resilience. Economic and Environmental resilience scores fall below the overall average, while Social, Human, and Physical Capitals surpass it. Human Capital attains the highest score at 0.63, emphasizing the importance of individual agency, freedom of choice, and knowledge and skills in building climate change resilience.

### 3. **Bhotiya Tribe: Navigating Life in the Changed Realities of the Himalayas**

Neelam Joshi, University of Lucknow, India

With their immense geographical presence, the Himalayas have long been a crucial part of the cultural, social, and environmental fabric of the regions they span, transcending national borders. Like the mountains, the people of this region are tough yet volatile to radical changes. This paper explores the intricate relationship the Bhotiya tribe historically had with the region and its ecology. Bhotiyas were nomadic-agropastoral traders who understood, survived and even thrived by utilising the region's ecology. They maintained a careful balance by monopolising and still protecting their environment from external influences. However, after the Indo-Tibet border ceased, trade decreased through passes, nomadic practices declined, and livelihood methods changed. Today, Social media-driven tourism, religious pilgrimages, and the cross-border trade of Cordyceps (caterpillar fungus) are significantly altering these tribes' traditional ways and the region's ecological balance. The overexploitation of flora and fauna, unregulated tourism and the lack of infrastructure to manage these changes place much pressure on the higher ranges and alpine pastures, threatening the delicate ecosystems these tribes once protected. Himalayas are globally significant; their sustainability is not only the responsibility of people residing around them but a collective one.

#### **4. Facilitating Development or Rights of Tribes: The Paradox of Legislative and Policy Frameworks in Sikkim**

Nanuma Subba, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Development in Sikkim stands at the intersection of tribal life, a fragile ecosystem and heightened 'national priorities'. The introduction of large-scale industrial infrastructure, which is an important prerequisite to propagation of industries, is facilitated by the state using various legislative and policy frameworks. At the same time, rights and provisions enshrined in Article 371F of the Constitution of India marks Sikkim's special status offered at the time of merger in 1975. The constitutional privileges thus provided to safeguard the rights of people, especially tribes of Sikkim faces an uncertain future in the backdrop of the 'development' of large hydropower projects. This paper analyses laws, policy and reports of the hydropower projects in North Sikkim as it extricates the causes of conflict and the legal prerogatives involved—through a case law analysis, to understand forms of resistance that took place in the event of the introduction of such projects. The Lepcha tribe and their struggle against hydropower projects now constantly seek political solidarity and have known to take action in the form of protests to safeguard the environment and their lives.

### **Session 4 | Class and Social Stratification**

#### **1. The Colonial Hangover of the Gentlemen's Clubs in Kolkata, India: An ethnographic study**

Shreyashi Ganguly, York University, Canada

Gentlemen's clubs in Kolkata, India, instituted during the colonial era, played a significant role in intellectual and cultural exchange during that time and continue to be important aspects of the city's public life today. Interestingly, most of these clubs have managed to not only hold on to the colonial nostalgia but have also continued to perpetuate it through the ways in which they design their food menu, design their infrastructure, preserve the architecture of the clubs and, most importantly, recruit their members. This paper is an ethnographic study of three popular

gentlemen's club in Kolkata, and investigates how the clubs rely on imperialist nostalgia in their everyday functioning. I see this as a manifestation of a deep-seated and internalized colonial hangover. I argue that in contemporary times, these clubs perpetuate classism and exclusion on the basis of social and economic capital by glorifying a colonial past. In doing this, I attempt to arrive at an understanding of the exclusionary nature of the public spheres that are these gentlemen's clubs.

**2. Public Service Delivery and the Administrators: A Study on Challenges, Strategies, and Implications in Rajasthan (India)**

Akhil Bhardwaj, Punjab University, India

This comprehensive study thoroughly investigates administrators' challenges and issues in delivering public services, specifically focusing on the Rajasthan Guaranteed Delivery of Public Services Act (RGDPSA) 2011. The research involved interviewing 50 critical officials from 25 designated departments under the RGDPSA. The objective was to assess the Act's implementation, identify obstacles, and devise strategies for improvement. The findings highlight significant challenges, including financial constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the critical need for enhanced citizen engagement and technological integration. Notably, the study underscores the pivotal role of transparency, accountability, fairness, and stakeholder involvement in driving tangible improvements in public service delivery in Rajasthan.

**3. Power, Gender, and Class in India: A Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Patriarchal Oppression in Select Narratives**

Md Nasir Hossain, School of Sciences (English), Malla Reddy University, India

This study examines the narratives of Sima Ganguly, Renuka Das, Pritilata Mondol, and Kavita Bera, exploring the dynamics of power, gender, class, and patriarchy within familial and societal structures. It critically addresses how patriarchal norms intersect with class and gender to shape women's experiences of oppression and resistance. Using a qualitative approach grounded in Marxist-feminist theory, the study employs close textual analysis to uncover how patriarchal norms reinforce class and gender disparities, perpetuating cycles of oppression in both familial and societal contexts. Key themes include power dynamics within families, gendered power relations, the role of patriarchal norms, and the transformative potential of collective action in challenging traditional gender roles. Findings emphasize the exclusive influence of patriarchal oppression and class-based inequalities in shaping women's experiences. The study also highlights the role of platforms like Jana Sanskriti theater in empowering women to resist societal norms and challenge the status quo, emphasizing the need for systemic change to foster more equitable, gender-inclusive societies.

**4. (Un)Becoming in Transit: Interrogating the Gendered Spaces of Informality on a Kolkata Local Train**

Mahashewta Bhattacharya, University of British Columbia, Canada

Sarala worked at an upper middle-class household in South Kolkata. As she prepared to get off the Canning Local train at Sealdah railway station, readjusting her saree as per “shohure kayeda” (city style), it was not just routine. It was an (un)becoming. Based on case studies of women domestic workers in the city of Kolkata in Eastern India who travel regularly between village and city by local trains for work, this paper traces similar routine and ritualistic modes of self-organisation by which the Indian rural prepares itself in ways deemed suitable for the urban. Through ethnographic methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and visual methods, it tries to focus on the objects, narratives and practices around these standards which helps them organise their lifeworlds on either sides of the postcolonial binary constructions of urban/rural and modern/traditional. It reads into the murmurs among the material, sensory and corporeal worlds that animates the ‘ladies special’ railway compartments as liminal spaces of homosocial transition and maps the cultural shifts that occur in tandem with the spatial. In doing so, it is able to empirically study aesthetic and affective precarities that are parts of the gendered informal labour economies in the subcontinent.

## Day 2: Thursday, November 14, 2024

### Session 5 | Migration, Diasporas & Postcolonial Identity

#### 1. Artistic and fiscal addition of settlers in Canada

Sunanda Das, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India

The financial integration of refugees - or lack thereof - is a major issue in many host countries, including Canada. The financial influx of immigrants has been a clear goal of Canadian politicians since the early 1920s. Prior to 1967, Canada’s immigration application process moved to a points-based scheme, which assumed that potential immigrant applicants were selected based on numerous criteria that were obviously favourable to financial immigration. Despite efforts to circumvent the points system to inspire settlers who can easily adapt to Canada’s financial system, new settlers have not become as frugal as previous settlers. Why this might be the case was clarified several times in the future. There is a hint that the fact that Europe is experiencing a main exodus of refugees to Canada means that additional settlers are lining up by ethnic and then linguistic changes to the republics, raising the issue of potential problems. The social integration of settlers is said to be a major cause of the labour market consequences of settlers. This increases the issue of flavour given that the main flows of new settlers are notable sections, then that certain detrimental typecasts then national changes potentially limit use of their services.

#### 2. Canada: Immigrants Bearing the Brunt

\*Akierah Binns, University of Guelph, Canada, Dr. Nita Chhinzer, University of Guelph, Canada and \*Khushi Surana, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, India

Canada is heavily reliant on immigrants for labour force growth. India has been the largest source country of immigrants over the last decade, accounting for over 40% of all immigrants in 2023. We hypothesize that recent Canadian immigrants had worse employment outcomes than

established immigrants or native borns, and those differences were exacerbated by COVID-19. Using a cross-sectional data sample of over 500,000 participants in Canada's Labour Force Survey, we analyze employment outcomes, job insecurity, and work precarity in both the pre-COVID (March 2018–September 2019) and post-COVID (September 2022–March 2024) periods. Between-group differences were assessed using chi-squared and t-test analyses, and within-group differences were assessed using multinomial logistic regression models. The results reveal that recent immigrants experience the highest unemployment rates, job insecurity, and workplace precarity, as compared to other groups. Moreover, recent immigrants had worsening employment outcomes post-COVID-19, suggesting that their employment outcomes were more negatively impacted than other groups. These insights highlight the need for targeted policies to improve employment integration for immigrants, especially Indians since they represent a significant portion of the labour force. Addressing these challenges is essential for shaping future immigration, and public policies to fully leverage immigrants' contributions to Canada's labour force.

### **3. Silent Voices: Tales from the Borderland of India**

Arindam Goswami, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, India

The present paper takes a detour from the canonical study of Indian partition by following the representations of partition through the memorial narratives in the Select Indian English travel Narrative. The paper will particularly focus on the intersectionality of memory and narrative in the context of travel narratives and how memory is formed by and represented by narrative. For the study, the paper will engage in the literary analysis of select Indian English Travel Narratives such as *On a Truck Alone, to Macmahon* by Nabaneeta Dev Sen, *Gazing at Neighbours* by Bishwanath Ghosh, and *Borderlands: Travel Across India's Boundaries* by Pradeep Damodaran where such intersectionality can be noticed. . The memorial narrative in these texts is characterised by a spatial shift in terms of the different places visited by the traveller, as well as a temporal shift- often marked by the movement between the present time and partition time. The traveller's movement through the places becomes a movement through time, from present to past. The paper will further engaged into the study of this correlation of memory and mobility and how it does affect the presentation of the memory in the narrative.

### **4. Exploring Postcolonial Mythic Spaces: Reading Paratextual Illustration in Chitra Divakaruni's Novels**

Afroj Jahan, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India

The term "paratext" is introduced by Gérard Genette, who states that paratexts form the 'material construction of a book'. Therefore, in its exploration of postcolonial mythic spaces through paratextual reading, this paper examines a pertinent question of how postcolonial stereotypes/narratives are disseminated by publishing houses through visual and textual grammatology and, more imperatively, what is at stake in such representation. The Western publishing houses are responsible for the paratextual representation of Indian diasporic novels and participate in 'capital' and 'cultural' production from the Orient. The idea of myth-making being an essential decolonial praxis in postcolonial narratives is confronted when publishing

houses market postcolonial 'difference' through book cover illustrations. However, myths are crucial in shaping a nation's postcolonial identity(s). Through existing theories, this academic paper will navigate how the paratexts of Indian diasporic writer, Chitra Divakaruni's reimaginings of the Indian epics — Ramayana and Mahabharata forge post-colonial cultural hegemony while dismantling them subsequently. While doing so, this paper employs the theories of John Berger, Roland Barthes, Frantz Fanon and Graham Huggan, among other postcolonial literary critiques, to enquire about the aesthetics of political-ideological representation of paratexts of the two novels — The Palace of Illusions and The Forest of Enchantments

## **Session 6 | Gender and Caste Reassertion from the Margins**

### **1. Contesting Caste: Dalit Assertion in Contemporary Indian Cinema**

Somnath Waghamare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

The glorious century of Indian cinema has produced thousands of films that consolidate Brahmanic hegemony. These films signify power of privileged dominant castes, their culture and biases. The power of privileged castes in the cinema industry needs critical exploration and Dalit interventions in Indian cinema offer a critical site for such exploration. Dalits or Outcastes as historically oppressed 'Other' of the caste Hindus are increasingly contesting the purity of Indian cinema. Stories on Dalit life and struggle were missing in cinematic space as they almost always occupied roles of helpless victims (e.g. Achhut Kanya, Sujata and more recently Article 15). With globalisation of time and space we see some radical changes in Indian cinema especially in the Marathi and Tamil films. Nagraj Manjule's Fandry and Sairat and Pa. Ranjith's Madras, Kaala, Kabali, Natchathiram Nagargiradhu and Sarapatta Parambarai have radically challenged and altered the power and purity of Indian cinema. Dalit cinema or anti-caste movies are not just succeeding at the box office they also offer major resistance to set up possibilities of counter hegemony in Indian cinema. I argue that Ambedkarite ideas are at the core of anti-caste movies and the Dalit subject is portrayed as an Ambedkarite revolutionary.

### **2. Subverting and Reinventing the 'Mass hero': Reading the Performance of Stardom in Tamil New Wave Cinema**

Mohamed Ilyas Raffiudeen, Dr, B R Ambedkar University, Delhi, India

Post-millennial Tamil cinema has shifted its conventional focus from male stars to narrative-driven filmmaking, with the image of the 'mass hero' becoming a subject of disdain. Following the conventional two-star dichotomy formula in Tamil cinema since its inception, the early 2010s saw the rise of Vijay Sethupathy and Sivakarthikeyan, who challenged the traditional norms through their parodic television performances, replacing the two-star dichotomy. This paper analyses their cinematic turns in Super Deluxe (2019) and Remo (2016). Drawing on Judith Butler's theories on gender performativity and subversion, the paper examines how these stars reflect changing notions of the 'mass hero' and masculine discourse in the post-globalization era.

**3. (Un)learning Caste and Gender: Reconstructing Dalit Masculinities in Contemporary Telugu Cinema**

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In the South Asian context, particularly India, the discourse surrounding masculinity has primarily been concentrated on the construction of upper-caste traditional masculinities and alternative masculinities, often framed in relation to normative femininity. Consequently, the nuanced and multifaceted nature of Dalit masculinities, shaped by the intersectional workings of caste and gender identities, has been largely overlooked. This study seeks to address this lacuna by examining the evolving representations of Dalit masculinity in contemporary Telugu cinema, focusing on Karuna Kumar's *Palasa 1978* (2020) and Buchi Babu Sana's *Uppena* (2021). These films constitute a formative influence in addressing caste beyond the lens of dominant caste assumptions. Drawing on Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) multidimensionality model, this research contests the lopsided and reductive categorization of masculinity and Dalit manhood as a monolithic entity, proposing instead a conceptualization of Dalit masculinity as mobile and pluralistic. Through a critical discourse analysis of the select cinematic narratives, the study contributes to the discussion on reconstructing Dalit manhood as an adaptable and shifting identity, offering insights into the ways popular cinema reflects and challenges the existing gender relations and caste-based social order.

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**1. Youth Aspirations and Higher Education: An Analysis of Public University Students in India**

Disha Sharma, Dr B R Ambedkar University Delhi, India

This paper examines the aspirations of youth at a public university in India. It is based on data collected from my ongoing doctoral research on university life. I employ interviews and participant observations to analyze the complex dynamics that shape student aspirations. I explore how socio-economic backgrounds, family expectations, and personal interests impact students' goals and ambitions. Additionally, I investigate how external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have influenced these aspirations. By analyzing how these elements have altered or reinforced students' aspirations, I aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving aspirations of university students within the current socio-cultural context. Through this research, I shed light on the interplay between individual aspirations and broader socio-cultural influences. My findings offer insights into how students navigate their educational journeys and how their aspirations are shaped by both internal and external factors. This study contributes to the broader discussion on higher education and student experiences, emphasizing the nuanced ways socio-economic and familial contexts, as well as global events, affect student aspirations.

**2. A Vision for Bharat-Canada Energy Cooperation**

Sumit Kumar, Central University of Haryana, India

The evolving landscape of global energy demands and the pressing need for sustainable practices necessitate robust international cooperation. This paper explores the potential for deepening energy cooperation between Bharat (India) and Canada, two nations with complementary energy profiles and shared commitments to addressing climate change. By leveraging India's rapidly expanding energy market and Canada's advanced technological capabilities in clean energy, this study envisions a strategic partnership aimed at mutual growth and sustainability. The paper provides a detailed analysis of current bilateral energy exchanges, including the export-import dynamics of conventional and renewable energy resources. It also examines the policy frameworks governing energy cooperation in both countries, with a focus on India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and Canada's Clean Energy Strategy. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data on energy production and consumption trends with qualitative assessments of geopolitical and economic factors influencing bilateral relations. Theoretically, the paper draws on the principles of energy interdependence and international cooperation, arguing that a strengthened Bharat-Canada energy partnership can serve as a model for South-North energy collaboration. The findings suggest that enhanced cooperation could lead to significant advancements in energy security, technological innovation, and sustainable development for both nations.

### **3. Understanding How Informal Water Networks Function in Accessing Water in Peri-Urban Small Town In India**

Isaiamudhu SS, University of Hyderabad, India

Scholars have since long argued about the problematic position of the peri-urban interface, characterized by administrative and jurisdictional ambiguity, environmental degradation, and marginalization. Peri-urban waterscapes do not fit into existing urban or rural planning models because these same models largely fail to recognize the peri-urban interface as a distinct form of territorial development. Focusing on peri-urban areas for the study of water raises important questions about equity and justice, as it demonstrates how some groups gain improved access to water, while others are deprived of it as a consequence. This work attempts to conceptualize in detail the dynamics of community engagement in water access through informal means in peri-urban Madurai, a small town in Tamil Nadu, India. We focus on examining how informal access to water produces or reproduces extant inequalities like caste, gender, etc, in the peri-urban Madurai. Madurai exhibits features of a shrinking city, which adds an angle of exacerbated inequalities. A combination of qualitative and quantitative fieldwork involving household-level surveys in individual households and informal semi-structured interviews with water vendors in two localities of Madurai one in the center of the city (Avaniyapuram) and the other in the city periphery (Annaiyur) has been attempted.

### **4. Local Working of Patents in India: A Legal Analysis**

Vivek Kumar, Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta, India



The paper will analyse the interpretation of local working of patents from the jurisprudence developed by the WTO dispute settlement body in the case of Turkey — Certain Measures concerning the Production, Importation and Marketing of Pharmaceutical Products 16. The first part of the paper shall introduce the local working of patents under TRIPS. The second part of the paper shall focus on two WTO DSB cases: Brazil-US (2001) and Turkey-EU (2022). The third part of the paper shall analyse compulsory licensing in light of expropriation under the international investment law regime. This part will also focus on the present enforcement challenge of TRIPS obligation under WTO DSB. The fourth part of the paper will conclude the discussion on local working patents.