



SWEDISH  
COLLEGIUM  
for ADVANCED STUDY

## REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

**Session:** Social Change as the Story of Contemporary Indian Society, and Social Scientists as the Story Tellers I

**Session Convener(s):** Sailaja Nandigama, Wageningen University; Kasi Eswarappa, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad

**Chair:** Sailaja Nandigama, Wageningen University; Kasi Eswarappa, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad

**Comments:** -

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I) *Mining, Migration and “Neo-bondage” among the Gonds Panna, Madhya Pradesh*  
Smita Yadav, University of Sussex, Brighton

II) *Revisiting Participatory Community Forestry: Role of Actor-networks; Informal Norms and Practices; and Elite Control in Community Forest Management*  
Sailaja Nandigama, Wageningen University

III) *Law and Social Change in Contemporary Indian Society – Study With Regard to a Group Dhankut Living in Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh, India*  
Alok Chantia, Sri Jai Narain Post Graduate College, Lucknow, UP  
Preeti Misra, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, UP

IV) *Invisible Violence: New Forms of State Violence in the Neoliberal Era*  
Ruchika Singh, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn

V) *Separate Telangana Movement: The Demand for Statehood and the Question of Democratic Rights*  
B. Jagannatham, Central University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad

## ABSTRACTS

### Session description

21st Century India mirrors changing society and public consciousness. Change may be occurring in myriad forms but it is in the contextualization of caste, class, gender, social, political, power, policy, governance, participation, representation, development, innovation, and livelihoods of people among other concerns that we, the social scientists articulate this changing society. Last century resulted in phenomenal achievements in the field of scientific enterprise on the one hand, as well as, in the pursuit of science and technology studies (STS) on the other. Simultaneously, how we understand and represent the 'social' and the 'political' also underwent phenomenal changes at the local, national and international levels. Social scientists have become 'the story tellers' of and for their publics- interpreting, giving meaning and articulating this changing world. This session opens up space for critical reflections on the progression of these stories in the Indian context; and for investigating how the social scientific enterprise in India has been articulating its publics.

With few exceptions, caste, class and gender based power dynamics thoroughly influenced both society and polity of the Indian state during the post western hegemony. This panel invites scholars and academicians with interdisciplinary research background to share their stories and explore the different experiences related to the Social Science's representation of the Publics and the related caste, class and gender based identities in the Indian context.

### Papers

#### *I) Mining, Migration and "Neo-bondage" among the Gonds Panna, Madhya Pradesh*

Smita Yadav, University of Sussex, Brighton

My research is regarding the current situation of the Gond tribal people in Panna district, eastern Madhya Pradesh (MP). Like most Scheduled Tribes (ST), the Gond in Pannahave suffered displacement from forest areas and disruption of their previous way of life. They are among the poorest peoples in India and MP and suffer low levels of literacy. Panna District rates low on Human Development and Gender Development indices.<sup>1</sup> Levels of child labour and migration are so high that many of its schools are simply not functioning. There are high rates of seasonal and permanent migration.

Three interrelated factors now combine to affect the Gonds, and in particular their access to resources, in ways that are reinforcing and exacerbating their poverty and creating a new world of "neo-bondage".

- First, Panna is dominated by a forest/tiger reserve so extensive that a railway line cannot run into Panna town (population approximately 50,000).
- Second, Gonds' lives are greatly affected by their experience of national and regional forest policy. Some ST people in the district support themselves by the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFP).
- Third, Gonds' lives are also shaped by mining; Gonds have long worked in 'artisanal' mining and quarrying. Since 1960, however, Panna has been the site of India's only mechanised diamond mine, which is state-owned. (At the same time, the association of large-scale mining with urban culture

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<sup>1</sup>Human Development Index (HDI) 0.470; Rank in Madhya Pradesh : HDI 41; Gender Related Development Index (GDI) 0.462; Rank in Madhya Pradesh : GDI 42 (MDHPReport 2002: 246)

may have an effect on local consumption patterns and aspirations). Large numbers of Gond people are involved in illegal small-scale diamond and stone mining.

In this proposal, I review the literature on Gond/Panna society and the region, before discussing literature on (a) livelihoods; (b) mining; and (c) migration. Furthermore, the issues of debt bondage/"neo-bondage" appear in all three of these spheres of discussion. I'm particularly interested in how the state and other agencies construct 'the Gonds', the mismatch between SC policy and practice, and conflicts around the forest and tiger preservation policies.

These are used to develop an analytical framework that will guide the specific research questions. A section on methodology will outline the means of data retrieval necessary to address the central questions forming the body of the present research.

*II) Revisiting Participatory Community Forestry: Role of Actor-networks; Informal Norms and Practices; and Elite Control in Community Forest Management*

Sailaja Nandigama, Wageningen University

Critique of the top-down development and conservation interventions resulted in envisioning community based participatory interventions by the nation-states, international bodies and bilateral agencies like the World Bank and the UNDP. New modes of governance (participation) characterize these interventions, and a set of goals and objectives for the betterment of the target populations form their normative basis. However when these interventions hit the ground, they take a life of their own through getting performed by local actors and networks, governed by socially embedded norms and values and most importantly by subjective perceptions of key actors practicing the intervention. Implementation of these interventions often result in hybrid social consequences both intended as well as unintended. These resulting mutations and social transformations are depicted in this paper through following an ethnographic qualitative methodology. This paper bases these observations on a case of CBNRM intervention, in Southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh- to perform this complex and contextualized phenomena of social change occurring at the heart of the intervention processes. This paper borrows from an ethnographic case study on the World Bank sponsored Andhra Pradesh Joint/Community Forest Management interventions (APJFM/CFM) implemented from 1994 till 2010.

Key words: Social transformations, participation, formal and informal spaces, power relations, elite-capture, elite-control.

*III) Law and Social Change in Contemporary Indian Society – Study With Regard to a Group Dhankut Living in Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh, India*

Alok Chantia, Sri Jai Narain Post Graduate College, Lucknow, UP

Preeti Misra, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, UP

Change is a process and is inevitable. The earth has assumed its present form because of change only. The man has also transformed from Australopithecus to Homosapiens. So change is as natural as happening of day and night. But so far as change is concerned with respect to any society it is not uniform. It varies due to cultural changes, ethnic diversity and different geographic conditions. Every culture is peculiar which presents multifaceted story of change before social scientists.

The object of present paper is to analyse extent and manner of social changes brought by law in the life of a group Dhankut residing in Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh. Dhankut is an endogamous group of district Bahraich of U.P residing near indo-Nepal border. They represent 2087 population (2001 census). No literature is available about them so far. Their description is not given anywhere, even in district gazetteer they have been mentioned as Dhankut only. They claim themselves to be Vaish, but they are not listed in any caste hierarchy. Government, too, has not placed them under SC/ST/OBC category. Gotra is absent amongst them. It is neither agricultural, occupational nor service class group they are engaged in retail work. They believe in traditional Panchayat. Since they are not having any specific status, they are considered as equivalent to other Indians who are governed with Indian law and legislature. Due to poverty they are victim of circumstances and they cannot afford to go to Law courts for the resolution of their disputes.

Present study shows the role of law and legal institutions ensuring human rights amongst Dhankut. Law has an economic aspect too. Even after knowing all the laws and its proceedings an individual is not capable to knock the doors of court because of lack of money. So it is very important to know the role of economy in accessing law for the redress of grievances. It is also important to analyse the existence of local political organization for maintaining law and order in a community while many democratic legal institutions are present. In this regard Dhankut represents the best picture to analyse the significance of law in bringing about social change in their group.

It is a participant observation based study. It is an exploratory cum descriptive type of work. Since most of Dhankuts are illiterates, 300 Dhankuts above 18 years of age, both male and female were chosen for the interview by random sampling. This study was carried out between 15 April and 15 June 2010.

#### IV) *Invisible Violence: New Forms of State Violence in the Neoliberal Era*

Ruchika Singh, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn

Scholars (Appadurai, 2001; Appadurai, 2006; Harvey, 2008; Mitchell, 2002) argue that neoliberalism perpetuates 'new' forms of violence world over. Further, scholars - Appadurai (2001; 2006); Harvey (2008); Mitchell (2002)- of neoliberalism have highlighted illegitimation, marginalisation, criminalisation as 'new phenomenon' that are central to motoring of neoliberal policies in the developing world. It is contended that Neoliberalism has created conditions for capitalist class formation in countries like India, China, Russia, etc. (Harvey, 2007, p. 35). For Harvey, 'accumulation by dispossession' is a new form of state violence being practiced by the state in the neoliberal era that marginalises, illegitimises and invisibilises the 'have-nots'. For instance, a new form of 'accumulation by dispossession' according to David Harvey in the Indian context are the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) that are planned for industrial development of the country which displaces a section of the population. However, displacement for development or marginalisation of people is not unique to neoliberal policies in India (or elsewhere). Development projects have always marginalised a certain section of the populace. So, is Harvey's argument about 'accumulation by dispossession' a new form of state violence marred by ahistoricity? Or has the nature of marginalisation for the displaced population changed with ascendance of neoliberal policies creating thus a new form of state violence? A secondary question that is examined is: if with ascendance of neoliberal policies the nature of state and systems of governance has changed i.e. are new instruments activated because of neoliberalism (new actors, new institutions, new political practices) that the Indian state did not have access to earlier which have led to perpetuation of new forms of bloodless violence. Overall, this paper examines what is 'new' in the marginalisation motored by neoliberal policies using comparative case study method in context of India. The paper undertakes a comparison of two projects: the Bhakra Nangal Project in the state of Himachal Pradesh and SEZs that are being set up in the state of Gujarat. This paper argues that ascendance of neoliberal policies in India have led to perpetuation of 'new forms of state violence' that are more covert and invisible than actual violence.

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V) *Separate Telangana Movement: The Demand for Statehood and the Question of Democratic Rights*

B. Jagannatham, Central University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad

The paper deals with the Separate Telangana Movement: the issues and the concerns that are involved in it and focuses on the brief history of Andhra Pradesh particularly of the Telangana region. It analyzes the reasons for the movement, examines the electoral politics and the political developments in the movement. The paper further explores the attitude of the State and of the leadership and the complexities involved in the movement. It tries to see the relation between the electoral politics and the movement. As a part of this analysis the rise of the Joint Action Committees- the students Joint Action Committees and several other joint action committees in the movement also assumed importance. It looks at the attitude of police and judiciary towards such movements. In probing the phenomenon, the study tries to assess the democratic processes and trends that this movement has thrown up. The paper looks into the process of democracy: formal and substantial, it attempts to assess the movement from the angle of deepening of democracy. This paper covers democratic debates from different social groups, political formations, democratic voices and grassroots perceptions. The paper also reflects on people's aspirations and underlying democratic drives. To probe into the process of democracy, this study looks at the nature of the ongoing debates and their democratic import. In the backdrop the study tries to see democratic rights demands within Telangana movement with a hope that it would provide a deeper insight into the dialectics and dynamics of democracy.