

Call For Papers

**NARRATIVES OF
DISCRIMINATION:
INTERROGATING
CASTE, SECT, AND RACE**

26-27 MARCH, 2020

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
MOTILAL NEHRU COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

Narratives create identity at all levels of human social life. Narratives of discrimination engage with the politics of identity which has been largely pervasive for the marginalised sections. The implications of denying a voice to the subaltern is a reaffirmation of the hegemonic rhetoric. The imagined characteristics of symbolic boundaries produce narratives that are cognisant of the social systems. A homogeneous society does not naturally translate into an equal and egalitarian state. The challenge, then, is to overcome these systems of oppression and disavow the structures that further impose dominance.

Unilateral laws related to marriage, citizenship, human rights, environment, refugees, and women among many others are harsh on people who come from marginalised communities. History is replete with discriminatory practices that are in themselves a discursive minefield. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we re-visit discriminatory practices within India and on the international scene by examining texts that testify foreclosure and disenfranchisement. The secessionist and the government discourse needs to be heard since discrimination fractures society while dissent sets a vicious trajectory which triggers reactionary forces to clamp on. One needs to analyse why sectarianism continues to exist. Do the marginalized occupy a space or are they victims to identarian politics that form a narrative which interrogates discrimination and cultural taboos that subtly restrict rights and prerogatives of sections in the society?

“Caste” was first used by the Portuguese to denote the social classification that existed in India. This system has religious and biological theories behind it. The religious theories explain that according to the *Rig Veda*, Purush (the primal man) destroyed himself in order to create human society and the four different Varnas were created from the four different parts of his body. According to the biological theory, Varna means different shades of colour and represents the individual’s temperament. The three categories of qualities or gunnas are Sattva (white), Rajas (red), and Tamas (black). These in combination of various proportions constitute the class of people all over the world with temperamental differences. This follows that Brahmins, who usually inherit sattva qualities are a “superior” caste and Surdas who inherit Tamas qualities are the “inferior” caste. Scholarship on caste subscribes to contrasting points of view whether the Indian caste system has withered or not. Pauline Kolenda, D.N. Majumdar and Gardner Murphy, S.N. Srinivas are of the opinion that although the caste system is weakening, it has not disintegrated. Andre Beteille, K.M. Kapadia, I.P. Desai say that the caste system is not transforming itself fast and is persisting in the form of complex networks of interest groups legitimised by religion.

Caste however should not be seen as a variant of race and casteism is not racism under a different name. In the United Nations Conference on racism held in August 2001, the “caste is race” thesis re-emerged. There are two reasons as to why caste is often mistaken for another kind of racism. The first is a misreading of Vedic texts. The second reason is that there are similarities between the treatment that was meted out to blacks in southern United States and in apartheid South Africa and the way the so-called untouchables were treated in Hindu society.

The discrimination on the basis of race has generated a very active body of work in order to address questions related to racism, racial segregation and racial identities. These questions also involve concepts of belonging, location, rights and empowerment in order to make visible the races that were excluded and oppressed for a very long time. The studies based on race call for a celebration of ‘racial difference’, a difference that was throughout made an instrument of discrimination, exploitation and slavery by the White oppressive forces. The movements such as the Black Arts movement and Harlem Renaissance were crucial in advocating the importance of Black and African American aesthetics. The concepts of the self, identity, representation, expression and resistance form the core of the narratives based on race.

As already indicated, papers could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Discrimination and creation of hierarchy
- Interrogating ideologies
- Caste and cultural subordination
- Interplay of identity and alterity in racial discourses
- Intersection of race, caste, and gender
- Investigations in heterotopic spaces
- Various representation of the marginalized self
- Narratives of resistance

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Abstracts (not more than 300 words) relating to the sub themes of the conference in form of academic papers are invited adhering to the following guidelines.

1. Abstracts (up to 300 words), only in English, should describe background, purpose, method, results (if any), and contributions of the study. Indicate the form of presentation
2. Use 12-point Times New Roman font for the text, 14-point for heading with single line spacing without indentations, 1-inch margin throughout

3. Provide names of authors/ co-authors, affiliations, email address and contact number of corresponding author(s) in **Bold**
4. All submissions must be original
5. Submit the abstract as per the schedule given below
 - Abstract Submission (250-300words): 12 February 2020
 - Intimation of Acceptance: 18 February 2020
 - Full Paper Submission (4000words): 12 March 2020
 - Intimation of Programme Schedule: 18 March 2020
 - Abstracts may be sent to deptofenglish.mlnc@gmail.com
 - No TA will be provided

Please read the following rules carefully before beginning the Registration process:

- Once the abstract has been selected, the author/ co-authors need to register on the college website by the final deadline. Only registered authors/ co-authors/ attendees will receive a certificate
- Registration fee of Rs 1000/- would be charged from Faculty delegates. Research Scholars and student delegation would be charged Rs 500/- as registration fee.
- Registration fee includes conference kit, snacks, and lunch for conference days
- The registration fee is non-refundable
- The organisers reserve the right to accept or reject any research paper without assigning any reason
- Registration form can be downloaded from the website of the college

Dr. Brahma Dutta

Convenor

Seminar Academic Committee

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