



Call for Papers

Work, Identity and Livelihood in “New” Nepal: Conversations within South Asia

Conference date: 18-19 July 2019
Venue: South Asian University, Delhi

CONCEPT AND FORMAT

This conference is second in the series initiated in 2017, and it seeks to take further its engagement with the question: how does “work” constitute one or more of the multidimensional identities Nepalis hold within and outside Nepal? The marker of the proposed conference for 2019, as was the case with the first held on 22-23 July, 2017, is that we want a conversation to be developed between scholars working on this topic on/in Nepal with others in the South Asia region, as a way of overcoming methodological nationalism in scholarly speak but also to tap onto the synergy of thinking and action in terms of policy and practice. In concrete terms, as was the case with our first conference, all papers being presented in the proposed conference will be on Nepal, and all discussants will be topic specialists from outside Nepal. The conversation in this conference will be interdisciplinary in nature. We hope that a film festival being organized at the end of the conference will facilitate interdisciplinary conversations even further.

WORK, IDENTITY AND LIVELIHOOD

“Work” is defined broadly to accommodate discussions about how individuals perceive their own work and how these are perceived by others, deeply influencing the way their everyday identities are formed and played out. In this, we envisage work not only as constituents of the class status – as has been highlighted routinely in the ongoing discourses – but as an identity marker that shapes everyday lives of common people in a way that questions of governance and justice are framed. We also wish to go beyond the aid industry’s assumption of work being primarily an economic activity concerned with material achievement or “productivity”. Our premise is that work is entwined with an individual’s identity which is then negotiated in social, political and cultural fields thus influencing how social stratifications emerge or change over time.

FOCUS FOR THE 2019 CONFERENCE

Some of the papers from our last conference generated a meaningful discourse on the cycles of hegemonisation and also the forms of resistance that evolve in response. Further, the progress on implementing and institutionalising a federal structure in Nepal under the new constitution meant that regulatory framework for work and livelihood has undergone important changes. What is historically significant about this new state structure is that it is an outcome of a violent war (waged by the Maoist rebels) as well as a civil society movement (fought by citizens belonging to several political ideologies) aimed at underpinning projects of state restructuring onto the question of social justice.

This conference intends to take these discussions further by inviting papers on the changing dimensions of work and identity in Nepal. Situated at the tail end of a very long transition that began with the formal end of a civil war in 2006 and promulgation of a new constitution in 2015, it is timely for us to initiate discussion on everyday work and life in “new” Nepal. It is equally opportune for this conference to ask how have the lives of the marginalised groups, including the women and the Dalits as well as the Janajatis and Madheshis, changed (or not) during this transition.

Combined with the premise of federalisation within Nepal is the dialectic of migration and diasporisation which informs the work- and identity-related choices available to Nepalis abroad. When framed within this socio-political field, and in the context of the processes of globality and globalisation, this conference seeks to discuss questions such as: What are the new social and bureaucratic institutions emerging through the processes of hegemony and resistance vis-à-vis work-places and work-choices? Do they give rise to new forms of deliberative or everyday politics that alter the meaning of nation-state for Nepal? Here we are informed by discourses that attribute work and livelihood as well as governance and justice as central to imaginations and practices of nation-state.

We list a broad area of focus including but not limited to the following:

- Identities and activism of work and labour
- Gender, caste, ethnicity and regionality
- Paid and unpaid domestic work
- (Un)touchability and work
- Child labour, bonded labour and issues of exploitation
- Labour policies, institutions and unions
- Knowledge, technology, skills and social capital
- Environment, safety and dignity
- Central and federal policies and organizations governing work

- Migration and diaspora
- Cross-border clusters and traffic

Please send your abstracts on papers or panels (maximum 500 words) to mallika@sau.ac.in and tristan.brusle@cirs.fr. The deadline for submission is **February 28, 2019**. Full papers should be no longer than 5000 words excluding reference and footnotes, and are strictly due on **30 June, 2019**.

Contributors are encouraged to seek independent funding for travel. Some support may be provided for selected scholars travelling from within India and Nepal. Local costs of all participants will be borne by the organisers.

This conference will connect Nepal with South Asian scholarships through having discussants from the wider region.

Organisers

South Asian University, New Delhi
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi
Martin Chautari, Kathmandu
Centre for Himalayan Studies, CNRS, Paris