



St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata

Department of Sociology

CALL FOR PAPERS

International conference on "**Contemporary caste gender and minority questions in West Bengal and Bangladesh: Some Explorations**". St Xavier's College, Kolkata. 31st October to 2nd November, 2019.

CONVENORS:

Dr. Sarbani Bandyopadhyay Assistant Professor, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata

Mr. Zakir Hossain, Nagarik Uddyog, Dhaka

Mr. Soumitra Dastidar, independent film maker

ENGLISH and BANGLA will be the languages for the proceedings at the conference.

The BANGLA version of Concept Note is available as a separate link

Confirmed Resource Persons

Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Professor of History, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand

Manoranjan Byapari, Writer, Winner of Hindu Literary Prize 2019

Manohar Mouli Biswas, President, Bangla Dalit Sahitya Sanstha

Kalyani Thakur Charal, Writer, Poet

Varuni Bhatia, Assistant Professor, University of Michigan, & Associate Professor, Azim Premji University

Sipra Mukherjee, Professor of English, West Bengal State University

Zakir Hossain, Nagarik Uddyog, & BDERM, Dhaka

Parimal Ghosh, Retired Professor, Calcutta University

Maroona Murmu, Department of History, Jadavpur University

Hilal Ahmed, CSDS, New Delhi & Assoc. Editor *South Asian Studies*

Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of History, Harvard University

CONCEPT NOTE

Recent years have seen a growing interest in scholarship around caste in West Bengal. Works of Sekhar Bandyopadhyay have been pioneering in opening up the caste question in Bengal. Since then the caste question has been approached in several ways: through interrogating the politics of Partition, through the

refugee problem, through the unpacking of what is known as the Bengali middle class (Sen D 2012, 2018, Sen U 2014, Bandyopadhyay S 2016).

Refugee studies of Joya Chatterjee, Romola Sanyal, for instance have not looked at caste as such. But they have questioned the figure of the refugee as the victim by looking at the role of refugees as active actors. In doing this they have brought to the fore the intersections of refugee and communal identities in the making of the refugee question in West Bengal. The new scholarship on caste in Bengal has initiated major shifts in the understanding of large processes and events, such as the Partition, 1947. Focus on undivided Bengal has been a part of this scholarship. For a contemporary understanding of caste and minority questions here, the contemporary must be charted in a larger sense. If Partition was one way of resolving the caste question in Bengal (Sen 2012), has it been adequately resolved in West Bengal? Post Partition, what happened to caste in East Pakistan/Bangladesh? Is there a caste question in contemporary Bangladesh? What is the nature of the caste question in West Bengal and Bangladesh? How do the caste and minority questions speak to each other in this region? The minority question is not being limited only to religion and religious minorities but may also be approached for instance in terms of language, sexual identities. How does a gendered lens enable us to complicate and understand the dynamics of these intersections. Indeed the events that have been crucial to the longer and contemporary history of this region cannot be adequately conceptualised if we do not address the intersections of caste gender and minority questions. How do these questions play out in the everyday lives of people in the region? A few recent compilations (Parvez and Biswas 2013) on the Dalit and excluded groups in Bangladesh help us in raising these aspects. We may ask:

How have the hierarchies of gender, caste and majority-minority intersected and structured the lives, aspirations, (im)mobilities in this regional context? What transformations have these questions undergone? What has been the response of the state in West Bengal and Bangladesh? In what ways have politics and its perceptions been structured by these identities and hierarchies? The question on response of the state becomes a little complicated with Bangladesh being a sovereign nation state and West Bengal a part of the Indian Union. What processes of resistance have taken place in the region?

This conference intends to explore the dimensions of the caste gender and minority questions in West Bengal and Bangladesh. An exploration and problematisation of the two Bengals along these lines becomes more significant now since the minority question in Bangladesh has emerged as an essential aspect of West Bengal's political and social life. Through such exploration we intend to move towards a theorisation that does not see caste gender and minority questions in separation but in intersection with each other within this regional context.

Papers are invited from researchers, writers and activists around this concept note. A 300 word abstract with a CV of applicants may be e-mailed to: sxc.conf2019@gmail.com

DEADLINES:

Last date for receiving abstracts: **31st July 2019.**

Notification of acceptance: **12th August 2019.**

Submission of full papers: **1st October 2019.**

Registration is required.

Registration fees in INR

Foreign participants: 1500

Indian participants: 1000

Student participants: 500

Registrations open from 1st August to 15th October 2019

Registration form and payment links will be uploaded soon on the website.

Registration fees include Conference booklet, refreshments and lunch on all three days of the conference and certificate of participation.

Subject to availability of funds a few **travel bursaries** maybe available for participants. Accommodation would be provided to participants.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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