

University of Mumbai



Department of Sociology

(Estd. 1919)

Cordially invites you to the ICSSR (New Delhi) sponsored
National Conference

on

***Reframing the Environment:
Resources, Risk and Resistance in Neoliberal India***

21-22 January, 2016.



Thursday, January 21, 2016

9:30 a.m. Inaugural address: **Dr. Sanjay Deshmukh**
Honourable Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai

10:00 a.m. Keynote address: **Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan**
Professor of History, Ashoka University

Venue: ICSSR Conference Hall, J.P. Naik Bhavan
University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E) Mumbai-400098.



Friday, January 22, 2016

4 p.m. **Special Public Lecture** by
Dr. Sunita Narain
Director General

Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi

Venue: Pherozeshah Mehta Auditorium, Department of Civics and Politics
University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai- 400098

Dr. B.V. Bhosale
Professor and Head

Dr. Manisha Rao
Conference Co-ordinator

Concept note

The term environment is a broad concept that implies anything from actions of organisms to actions and reactions of various social and cultural relations. Further, the term implies social and material relationships among people and nature. The environment is considered to be the 'physical and material bases of all life, including land, air, water, as well as the vital material and energy resources in the surroundings of a society' (Humphrey & Buttel 1995:3). It is socially contested and is represented in multiple ways. Central to the project of development, has been to treat nature as a 'resource' to be exploited and used so that it acquires economic value. By labeling soils, water, forests, people as resources, they are reconstituted as objects of 'scientific' management and exploitation. Interpreting the environment in terms of 'resources', 'risk', 'management' and 'efficiency', continues to promote development as a cultural and civilisational mission that shapes the world in the image of the West. Besides promoting new strategies, it also tells people how to see nature, society and their own actions. As this language is adopted around the world, it will become more and more difficult to see nature in terms of respect, instead of as a resource, society in terms of the common good, instead of production and efficiency. Alternative ways of knowing and relating to nature, which often come from people at the margins, run the risk of either being erased or appropriated.

Contemporary discussions on environment emphasize the use & abuse of the environment in multiple ways and by multiple means. The collective mobilizations around environmental alteration, degradation and destruction signal the crises in the material bases of life based at the intersections of caste, class and gender.

This process, it is argued, has begun on an unprecedented scale since the neo-liberal turn in India. There is an emerging and significant process of appropriation of land and natural resources to help the 'growth' story. The State is appropriating land from farmers and other communities for development projects such as mining, industrial development, mega infrastructure development projects and SEZs that rarely benefit the local communities, leading to loss of livelihood and massive displacement. A new enclosure movement is being witnessed in India wherein rules and regulations are being restructured in terms of access, use and management of resources. Marginalised groups and local communities are being sidelined from access and control of resources, whether it is land, water, forest or urban commons. There are increasing instances of

land appropriation for so called 'environmental' ends. There are instances of green agendas being at the core of land appropriation in terms of biodiversity conservation, ecotourism and also where large tracts of land are appropriated for cultivation of bio-fuels.

This appropriation of nature builds on earlier histories of colonial and neo-colonial appropriation of resources in the name of the environment, whether it was to set aside forest reserves, national parks or stop or contain so called destructive local practices. However it involves new forms of valuation, commodification and markets for different aspects of nature being built across a range of actors and alliances such as venture capitalists, traders and consultants, ecotourism companies, green activists and consumers who seem to have common interests.

Through this conference the attempt would be to unravel the underlying power relations that are masked and hidden in the present discourse of ecological sustainability. The attempt would be to ask as to what extent this green appropriation constitutes new forms of appropriation of the environment. We wish to understand the inter-linkages of discourse, resources, risk and resistance in the contemporary neo liberal world. What are the political and discursive dynamics that translate the circulation of green capital into appropriation on the ground? What does this imply for communities and their livelihoods, the different landscapes and ecologies? Does this mean a restructuring of rights and authority and if so in whose interests? Can we theorize this, on a larger canvas, to mean the beginning of an ecological turn in the social sciences and if so, is there an ideology to it?

This conference invites papers that examine the following sub-themes:

- Politics of constructing nature as 'Resources'
- Risks involved in constructing nature as resource
- Nature of Resistance around environmental issues in neoliberal India
- Alternative and plural visions of protecting the environment

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Special Public Lecture at Pherozeshah Mehta Auditorium

Department of Civics & Politics, University of Mumbai

Programme Schedule

21.01.2016

9:00-9.30 a.m. *Breakfast and registrations*

9.30 a.m.

Welcome: **B.V. Bhosale** *Head of Department*

Introduction: **Manisha Rao**, Conference Co-ordinator

Inaugural address: **Sanjay Deshmukh**, Honourable Vice Chancellor.

Keynote address: Mahesh Rangrajan, Professor of History, Ashoka University.

India's Environment: Complex Pasts, Contested Futures.

11:00. a.m *Tea*

11:30 a.m. Session I: *Forests, Wildlife and Issues of Conservation*

Chair: **Indra Munshi**, Former Professor, University of Mumbai.

Sudha Vasan, University of Delhi. *Consuming the Tiger: Experiencing Neoliberal Nature.*

Arupjyoti Saikia, IIT Guwahati. *Kaziranga National Park: Law, Politics and Nature in Modern Assam.*

Gita Chadha, University of Mumbai. *Nature, Nation, Science and Gender.*

Grishma Rana, University of Mumbai. *Fiction of Terrain: The Foothills Tarai.*

1:00 p.m. *Lunch*

2:00 p.m. Session II: *Natural Resources Management and Issue of Rights.*

Chair: **Ramesh Kamble**, University of Mumbai.

Session Plenary Speaker: Gail Omvedt and **Bharat Patankar**, Kasegaon Maharashtra.

Jotiba Phule: Perspectives on Natural Resource Management and Issue of Rights.

Shashank Kela, Social activist. *Staking the Terrain: Environmental History, Nature Conservation and Adivasi Movements.*

Rithambara Hebbar, TISS Mumbai. *Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve: Reflections from the Field.*

M.T. Joseph, University of Mumbai. *The Forest Rights Act and the Katkaris: A Case Study from Mangaon Taluka, Raigad, Maharashtra.*

3:30 p.m. *Tea*

3:45 p.m. Session III *Water in a Neoliberal World*

Chair: **P.G. Jogdand**, University of Mumbai.

Session Plenary Speaker: Rajendra Singh, TBS Alwar.

Modern Problems: Traditional Solutions Climate Change/ Water & Food Security.

R.B. Patil, Shivaji University. *Protecting the Environment: Contribution of Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) in Maharashtra.*

Arun de Souza, St. Xavier's Mumbai. *Variiegated Dryland Ecologies and their Transformation into Productive Watersheds: Interrogating the Watershed Development Guidelines of the Govt. of India.*

Seema Kulkarni, SOPPECOM Pune. *Privatizing the Public: Critical Examination of Canal Irrigation in Maharashtra from an Equity Perspective.*

Sonali Wakharde, University of Mumbai. *Women's Participation in Water Conservation Programme*

22.01.2016

9:00 a.m. *Breakfast*

9:30 a.m. Session IV *Regional Diversities of Development, Displacement and Resistance*

Chair: **S.C. Rajora**, University of Kota

Chandan Kumar Sharma, Tezpur University. *Building "India's Future Powerhouse": Discourses of 'Development' and Popular Resistance in Northeast India.*

Sarmistha Pattanaik, IIT Bombay. *On Predatory Development: Ecological Crisis, Conflicts and Challenges of Displacement and Marginalization in Contemporary India- Observations from Odisha.*

B.N. Kendre, University of Mumbai. *Issues of Livelihood and Social Justice of Scheduled Tribes and Discourses on Environment in Maharashtra.*

Rita Malache, University of Mumbai. *Role of Tribal Women in Ecology and Environment Conservation.*

11:00 a.m. *Tea*

11:30 a.m. Session V *Land Issues, Neoliberal Politics and the Law*

Chair: **B.V. Bhosale**, University of Mumbai

Preeti Sampat, University of Delhi. *The Land Impasse: Rights, Resistance and Growth.*

Hita Unnikrishnan and Harini Nagendra, ATREE Bangalore and Azim Premji University. *Bonds that Divide: Urbanization and the Erosion of the Commons.*

Geetanjoy Sahu, TISS Mumbai. *Environment Movements and the Indian Judiciary.*

Abhiram Sahasrabudhe and N.C. Narayan, IIT Bombay. *Mapping Destruction of Mumbai Mangroves and Challenges to Environmental Governance.*

1:00 p.m. *Lunch*

2:00 p.m. Session VI *Resistance and Alternatives to Development*

Chair: **G. Gawali**, University of Mumbai.

Session Plenary Speaker: Ashish Kothari, Kalparviksh Pune. *Radical Ecological Democracy: Towards a Sustainable and Equitable Future.*

Pandurang Hegde, Activist/Farmer. *Challenges Before the Environment Movements in Neoliberal India.*

H. Chouhan, D. Parthasarathy & S. Pattanaik, IIT Bombay. *New Coastal Claims and Fisher Resistance in Mumbai.*

John Kurien, Azim Premji University. *Reframing Human Interactions with the Environment: Reflections from an 'Eco-System' Community for a Globalizing, Neo-Liberal World.*

4 p.m. Session VII *Special Public Lecture*

Chair: **Darryl D' Monte**

Sunita Narain, Centre of Science and Environment New Delhi. *New Environmentalism: Of the Poor, About Livelihoods and Affordable and So Sustainable Development.*

5.30p.m. *High Tea*

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