

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Guest Issue of the *Journal of Contemporary South Asia* (2017):

Caste: Contemporary Dynamics in South Asia and Beyond

Guest editors: Opinderjit Kaur Takhar, Hugo Gorringe, Surinder S. Jodhka,

Papers are invited for a Special Issue of the *Journal of Contemporary South Asia*, to be published in 2017 on the theme of “***Caste: Contemporary Dynamics in South Asia and Beyond***”. We welcome papers which discuss the many implications that caste has on the social and political fabric of the South Asian community, both at home and in countries with well established South Asian communities.

The special issue will bring together a range of empirical studies detailing the role that caste plays in social relationships as a feature of South Asian communities both in South Asia and around the world. We are looking for papers that offer empirical and theoretical engagements with caste in its contemporary forms, and that help elucidate its relationship with identity, politics, religion and social relations.

Papers, for example, might discuss identity politics in relation to caste identity in establishing rigid boundaries as distinct from those of religion, sect and region. Are these trajectories wholly in the aspirations of achieving equality or do they have underlying political tones? In recent elections, for example, many Dalits voted for the BJP even in Uttar Pradesh where the Bahujan Samaj Party has traditionally been strong: does this represent a shift in Dalit aspirations – a move from identity to development – or something different? Much has also been written about Dalit identity politics as though this was divorced from material or ‘real’ politics. Papers that address these themes and tease apart the interplay between caste, identity, religion and politics will be welcome.

In terms of the British context, the British Sikh Report 2013 indicates that a majority (61.2%) of the 662 British Sikhs who responded to a questionnaire indicated that they have no concern for caste-related issues. However, British Parliament was successfully lobbied by Dalit communities who strongly argue that legislation would protect them from caste-based bullying, mostly by non-Dalit Hindus and Sikhs. This raises several questions: how were campaigns against caste discrimination in the UK mobilised and organised? Does this reflect concerns about discrimination or mark a new wave of Dalit assertion that is seeking to strengthen equalities legislation across the board? What does this “globalization” of caste mean for the caste question and its articulations in India?

Whilst British campaigners may debate whether anti-caste legislation is essential or not, existing legislation has failed to prevent continued caste atrocities in India. The recent disturbing news of two Dalit cousins having been gang-raped and hung from a mango tree

necessitates a scholarly discussion on attitudes towards Dalits in rural India. We invite papers on caste in rural and urban India and on its interplay with socio-political organisations like courts, political parties and panchayats. Numerous high-profile cases have gained global media attention, but yet more atrocities go unremarked. What underpins the continued caste violence in India? Is there, to use Mendelsohn and Vicziany's phrase, a 'new form' of caste violence in evidence here? If so, what form does this take? Papers could reflect on forms of caste politics – such as those articulated by intermediate caste groups in Tamil Nadu, practiced by khap panchayats in Haryana and elsewhere, or the rise in so called 'honour killings' that follow cross-caste unions.

We also invite papers that deal with Dalit parties, politics and transformative projects. Recent decades have witnessed a significant increase in Dalit assertion both at a local and at a global level. Dalits organising for change have used an array of tactics and modes of organisation in their search for a more equitable and just social order. From the erection of Ambedkar statues on reclaimed land, through engagement in state and national politics in India, to global interventions at UN conferences Dalit activists have mobilised to confront discrimination and secure justice. Less assertively, others have sought to bring about change from within through education or commerce or the creation of institutions such as the Dalit Chamber of Commerce in India. We invite papers that chart these various projects and think through how they are organised, what their demands and tactics are and what they have achieved. We invite engagement with key questions such as: has Dalit politics hit an impasse? Is it possible to eradicate caste when you mobilise on that basis? Will neo-liberalism lead to greater opportunities for Dalits or lead to the shrinking of the state and the key resources it offers? Finally; we call for reflections on how Dalit movements might best challenge casteism in the 21st Century. How is caste reproduced as a structure of social inequality in context of significant erosion of the traditional jajmani relations and the old ideology of karma and patronage?

In sum, we hope for a range of papers that will both chart and help explain the contemporary dynamics of caste in its lived realities in South Asia and beyond.

The special issue will be guest edited by Hugo Gorrings (Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Edinburgh), Surinder Singh Jodhka (Professor of Sociology, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi) and Opinderjit Kaur Takhar (Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies, University of Wolverhampton).

Papers should be submitted by 1st July 2015 to the *Journal of Contemporary South Asia* by following the 'Instructions to authors' on the website.

Contemporary South Asia considers all manuscripts on the strict condition that

- the manuscript is your own original work, and does not duplicate any other previously published work, including your own previously published work.

- the manuscript has been submitted only to *Contemporary South Asia* ; it is not under consideration or peer review or accepted for publication or in press or published elsewhere.
- the manuscript contains nothing that is abusive, defamatory, libellous, obscene, fraudulent, or illegal.

Kindly read the 'Instructions for authors' on the Journal's website before submitting your manuscript, available at:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=ccsa20&page=instructions#.U4254DdOWi4>

Please remember to mark your paper as a consideration for the special issue on **Caste: Contemporary Dynamics in South Asia and Beyond**.

We look forward to receiving your paper by 1st July 2015 at the latest.

Regards,

Hugo Gorringe, Surinder S. Jodhka, Opinderjit Kaur Takhar.