

Call for Papers

Two-Day National Conference on 'Caste and Communication'

27-28th March, 2019

Organised by

Centre for Culture, Media and Governance (CCMG),
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

In collaboration with

All India Communication and Media Association (AICMA),
New Delhi





Caste as a social phenomenon has attracted much attention across disciplines. Although much has been explored and still being explored, however the phenomenon of caste and its associated process, ‘castesim’ is haunting the policy planners, institutions and intellectuals in everyday life of our existence. In the recent years, much has been talked about caste, however the fluidity and dynamism of caste system is yet to be settled theoretically

The present exercise is an attempt to explore communication and the constitution of caste in Indian society. Both the terms ‘communication’ and ‘caste’ are so intertwined that they constitute a life world through which they occupy a distinct location in Indian society. This is constituted by a set of elements drawn from history and from the existential determinants of human situation. The notion of lifeworld philosophically represents changing configurations of the vital existential and historical processes of society which shape its well being. The very idea of caste society ensures a certain form of coded principles of literacy that govern the social order. However, such codified text ensures a communication relation thereby determining the nature of participation of certain castes at the cost of marginalizing a set of other castes in a society. It equally eludes the social formation of communication in the pre caste society. Thus, caste as a communication community based on literacy presumes a linear conception of history with a hierarchized structure of communication undermining the emancipatory potential of speech or orality associated with community in society. Scholarly studies on caste take literacy as a starting point thereby undermining the potential of caste and communication as essential prerequisites to constitute a lifeworld that have forged to create a shared symbolic social order through oral narratives and discourses. Each society has signifying sensible material to construct its systems of symbolic communication characterised by interactivity and interbreeding. Shared symbolic order has immense range of meanings, values, customs and practices.

The persistence of caste as a communication community in the contemporary Indian society has to be seen in continuity of the oral tradition. Unlike the western experiences, the introduction of writing and print did not completely wither away the oral tradition. Orality not only co-exist in prominent ways with most advanced means of communication in Indian society, but also organises various discourses propagated through these advanced forms.

Themes



1. Caste, Literacy and Social Order
2. Caste, Gender and Communication
3. Caste, Class and Communication
4. Caste and Popular Culture
5. Caste and Media Representations
6. Caste and Media Organisations
7. Caste, Identity and Communication
8. Caste, Communication and Social Movements

Note: Original papers are invited for this proposed conference on, but not limited to, the above themes



This poses challenge to any scholarly engagement that informs the dichotomy of oral as traditional and print/electronic/digital forms of communication as modern. Written sources regarding the myths, folklores, folktales etc. are relatively uncommon. The principle of ‘civilized’ and ‘primitive’ here do not design cognitive models of cultural understanding and behaviour and proves sterile and inadequate. This dichotomous paradigm does not work as an effective symbolic mediation of power contestations. It severely errs because of an abysmal ignorance of the complex transitivity. Hence caste as communication indicates to the two way transitive process of interaction and negotiation rather than a fixed monolithic category waiting to be deconstructed. This interaction and negotiation is organised around various ambivalences which is a significant feature of the use of cultural forms in the process of communicational intercourse. The processes of exchange, cooptation, assimilation and re-appropriation highlight the intermingling of caste and communication. So instead of clear-cult polarization, what exists is multifarious and far reaching moves of transactions. This means that historically there are various moments where intense civilisational encounters take place leading to articulation, negotiation, interweaving and reinterpretation of symbolic forms associated with caste. There can be many ways in which people express their dissatisfaction and opposition to oppressiveness of caste. Reappropriation and re-investment of internalized dominant patterns with new meanings by subaltern groups should also be recognised and given as much importance as the processes of dominance and resistance.

One of the foremost articulations of shared symbolic order of caste system can be found in the contestations for dominance and resistance over symbolic assets of marginalised communities such as dalits and tribals providing them collective identity. There are innumerable instances where the assertion of identity over symbolic assets has met with violent reactions from privileged castes. The symbolic order may include elements of both material and immaterial culture such as – food, dress, festivals, rituals, discourses, narratives, artefacts, proverbs, folklores, songs, and so on. The proposed seminar advocates that the cognitive structure of the semantic process of dominance and resistance can be explored from the point of communicational exchange. The recent media expressions are free from representation and assertion of caste identity. It is no more caste appropriates these means of communication; indeed media may appropriate caste as well.

Note: *Selected papers will be published in an e-journal.*

Important Dates



Date of submission of
Abstract :
31st December 2018
(Monday)



Date of
Announcement of
Selected Abstracts:
7th January 2019
(Monday)



Date of Submission of
Complete Papers:
28th February 2019
(Thursday)



The abstract should be in 500 words. The word limit for the complete papers is 5000-7000 words.

The abstract and complete papers should be emailed to ccmg@jmi.ac.in

Should you have any query, please feel free to contact organizing committee at 9654621778.