

Jaya Menon

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The Department of History at Shiv Nadar University is privileged to collaborate with Ambedkar University, Delhi on the upcoming international Conference on Childhood and Youth, to be held at the Shiv Nadar University, on 6th - 7th January 2019. I would like to first congratulate Dr Divya Kannan, Assistant Professor in the Department of History, SNU, and Dr. Rukmini Sen, Professor of Sociology, and Director, Centre of Publishing at AUD, for bringing about a meeting of our two universities for a conference on such an important theme.

While children and youth as subjects of the developmental discourse from the point of view of education have been dealt with, academic research focusing on childhood has often been marginalized. However, we are now beginning to find a growing niche, in terms of articles and papers, as well as journals dedicated to this theme. Much of this research deals with the contemporary world or going back to the colonial period at best, and this is understandable from the amount of data that can be mined for a relatively neglected field. Perhaps, historians of earlier periods may be able to figure out challenging ways to work on such a theme. Archaeologists have been able to investigate children through material evidence such as the toys they played with, or the finger impressions they left behind on clay, or through their bodies themselves, carefully interred, in graves. The scope of childhood studies appears to be immense, and we can get a sense of a dynamic inter-disciplinarity from the diversity of themes to be dealt with in this very timely conference. This rich conference indicates too that each panel could well be developed into a conference on its own, and yet here will surely bring about an engaging dialogue between the presenters. I also hope that the presenters will enable a lively participation of SNU's students, the very subjects of this conference.

I would like to welcome all the participants, from India and outside, to Shiv Nadar University and hope that you will have a productive two days at the conference.

Rukmini Sen

Professor, Sociology, School of Liberal Studies and
Director Centre for Publishing
Ambedkar University Delhi

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The Centre for Publishing, AUD is delighted to be co-organizing its first international conference with the Department of History, Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida with the initiative coming from Dr Anandini Dar, anchor of the Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective at AUD and Divya Kannan, department of History, SNU. The Centre for Publishing came into existence in 2017 at AUD and since then has published/organized the following:

1. Published '**Utopia and Dystopia in Revolutionary Russia: The Russian Revolution Centenary Lecture**' delivered by Professor Madhavan Palat, retired Professor of Russian and European History at the Centre for Historical Studies, on 7 November 2017 <https://aud.ac.in/aud-publications>
2. Published **Conversations with Ambedkar: 10 Ambedkar Memorial Lectures** edited by Valerian Rodrigues in collaboration with Centre for Publishing and Tulika Press, New Delhi. The book was released on April 14, 2018 by Professor Pratap Bhanu Mehta, who delivered the 11th Ambedkar Memorial Lecture <https://aud.ac.in/aud-publications>
3. Co-Organized round table with feminist publishers and journalists titled '**Women's Voices, Visions of Democracy and Publishing**' on October 30, 2019. This was part of a workshop series under the UGC UKEIRI research project Teaching Feminisms Transforming Lives: Questions of Identity, Pedagogy and Violence in India and UK jointly conducted by Ambedkar University Delhi and University of Edinburgh <https://feministtaleem.net/>
4. Co-organized the Children's Day 2019 story telling event with Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective and AUD Creche on November 14, 2019
5. Published the first AUD Newsletter on December 9, 2019 <https://aud.ac.in/uploads/4/page/center-for-publishing/aud-newsletter-issue-1-december-2019.pdf>

The Centre intends to explore and contribute to new areas of knowledge generation in social sciences and humanities. The potential of developing childhood and youth studies as an interdisciplinary area of research and teaching in South Asia is manifold and this collaborative international conference is a step towards that direction. Publishing an annotated bibliography around this new field of enquiry and developing a network of scholars and writers on childhood and youth studies are some of the ways to move beyond the conference.

We are grateful to Shiv Nadar University for enabling us to host the conference in their premises and extending accommodation to the participants from outside of NCR. We are hopeful that this is a beginning of a longer association between two institutions and multiple disciplines.

Anandini Dar, PhD Childhood Studies

Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies and Anchor, Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective
Ambedkar University Delhi

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The Critical Childhoods and Youth Studies Collective (CCYSC) first formally came together in May 2018. This Collective developed out of an interest amongst faculty at AUD who teach and conduct research on issues pertaining to children, childhoods, and youth. The aim of CCYSC is to further the networks on multi-disciplinary research and teaching in the field of Childhood Studies; and plan research and other related activities in this area of inquiry.

The interest to develop such a collective also emerges from a larger need in the society and the growth of an emergent global field of scholarship of Childhood Studies. The founding Vice Chancellor of AUD, Prof Shyam Menon, also supported this initiative and had organized a meeting with a focus on “childhoods” in 2014. His visionary foresight of identifying innovative promising areas of study offered the required momentum for the Collective. The potential for multi-disciplinary scholarship in this area remains essential in the South Asia region, where either inquiries about the child subject have been resigned to discipline specific emphasis – such as developmental psychology primarily – or considered only the domain of the civil society sector, and child rights based organisations. The Collective finds that much work remains to bridge multi-disciplinary theories and fields of praxis in South Asia.

At AUD, various courses on the subject of children and youth and the category of childhood are already being taught across Schools ranging from, School of Letters, to School of Human Studies and School of Education Studies. These include both BA and MA level courses, and include, “Literatures of Childhood;” “ Writings for Children and Young Adults;” “Literature and the Young Child;” “Global Childhoods;” “Understanding Children and Childhood;” “Play, Learning and Creativity;” and “Understanding Children;” to name a few. Potential to bring these together for a holistic multi-disciplinary study and training in the area of childhoods and youth is rife for growth.

Since its inception the CCYSC has organised internal reading group meetings, and public events. The CCYSC planned and coordinated two Children’s Day events in 2018 and 2019, at Lodhi Road and Kashmiri Gate campuses, respectively. The 2018 Children’s Day Event included an Exhibition of Children’s Books by children’s book publishers, such as Duckbill, Katha, Bookaroo, Young Zubaan, Children’s Book Trust, DK, Ektara, Eklavya, among others. The recent 2019 Children’s Day organised on 14 November was organised in collaboration with the AUD Creche and the Centre for Publishing, and attended and supported by the current VC, Prof Anu Singh Lather. At the event, a children’s story-teller engaged children and adults alike, on the first of its kind event organised at the recently

opened Creche and day care at AUD. Such collaborations by the Collective are sought to maintain the multi-disciplinary focus, to relate theory with praxis, and organise events and networks for scholarly and critical exchange on the subject of childhoods and youth.

The Collective looks forward to the possibilities of new and lasting collaborations across Universities in India, as witnessed through this conference on “Childhood, Youth and Identities in South Asia” organised on 06-07 January 2020, at Shiv Nadar University, in collaboration with the Centre for Publishing, Ambedkar University Delhi, and the Society for the History of Children and Youth (SHCY). The conference will also conclude with a Roundtable on themes emerging from the discussions by the members of the Collective, such as, 1) Diversities of childhoods; 2) Problem of ‘developmental psychology’ in childhoods in India & moving beyond disciplinary boundaries; 3) Action Research/ Field Engagement in Childhoods; 4) Other themes of research interest. We hope that the deliberations from the roundtable and the conference at large, will lead to productive pathways for the growth of the network and field of Childhood and Youth Studies in South Asia.

Call for Papers

Conference on Childhood, Youth, and Identity in South Asia, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University, India, 6-7 January 2020

This two-day conference aims to bring together doctoral scholars and early career researchers invested in interdisciplinary research on themes of childhood and youth in South Asia. It seeks to address issues pertaining to the intersectional politics impinging upon constructions of childhood and youth categories across the region.

In South Asia, multiple and simultaneous definitions of youth and child-agents occupy various positions which challenge dominant Western notions of a 'universalised', 'protected' childhood and resist generalised characterisations of South Asian youth as 'helpless, weak, and powerless'. Embedded within racial, caste, and gendered categories, varying in age and status, these constructions are intensely contested terrains and often operate in covert ways. Who and what is a 'child' in the countries constituting South Asia? How are young men and women negotiating their everyday identities? Can their actions and contexts be located in a 'transnational/trans-regional' framework and pose a challenge to the state-citizenship nexus? Alternatively, do 'global' narratives of childhood and youth bring into focus South Asian bodies and images? How does diverse fields such as literature and law engage with these concerns?

As adult conceptions and state discourses predominantly shape notions of childhood and youth, an exploration of these groups' own experiences of events, their conceptions of time, engagements with age-related authority and peer groups, processes of education, literary representations, and politicisation becomes pertinent. However, their voices do not exist in a vacuum and often, children and youth face immense challenges from status-quo forces in matters of expression.

This conference seeks to explore these possibilities of inter-disciplinary research in probing the politics, ethnographies, and histories of childhood and youth in South Asia. Can they go beyond discourses of humanitarian aid and poverty? How do imperial and local histories impinge upon child and youth agents in various settings? In what ways do children and youth across various communities negotiate, resist, or conform to socio-political pressures and norms?

Papers may include the following themes but are not limited to these: Questions of law; histories of medicine; language and schooling; emotional formations; colonial childhoods; sexualities; literary representations; institutions and campaigns; cultures of consumption, youth and mobility; nations and nationalisms; memory; labour; geographies of childhood/youth

Abstract submission deadline: 1 November, 2019 (Word limit: 250 words)

Final Conference paper deadline: 22 December, 2019

Submissions must be emailed to : childyouth2020@gmail.com

If you are interested in just attending the conference and engaging with fellow scholars, please RSVP to the above email before 10 December 2019

International Conference on Childhood, Youth and Identity in South Asia January 6-7 2020

Venue for the conference proceedings: D Block, Third Floor, Room 330, Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida
Tea/Coffee, Lunch, and Conference Dinner will be at the C & D Atrium

Day 1: January 6 2020

9.00am-9.30 am- Registration

9.30am- 9.45 am- **Opening Remarks**

Dr Divya Kannan, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University

9.45am- 11.15 am

Session 1: Politics of Schooling and Pedagogic Practices

Discussant: Dr Akash Bhattacharya, School of Education, Azim Premji University

1. Educational Journeys of Muslim Girls in a Madrasa and Making of Islamic Womanhood

Dr Hem Borker, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamia

2. Construction of Childhood in the Government School Spaces of Delhi

Shailly Kumar, PhD scholar, Women and Gender Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi

3. Clean bodies in School: children's negotiations with sartorial and material discourses of hygiene, Tamil Nadu

Smruthi Bala Kannan, PhD scholar, Department of Childhood Studies, Rutgers Camden College of Arts and Sciences

11.15am-11.30 am: Tea/Coffee

11.30 am-13:00pm

Session 2: Youth, Nation, and the Development Question

Discussant: Dr Iman Mitra, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University

4. (Un)Contested temporalities: Navigating Adivasi Youth Identities in a Local Village Community in India

Dr Gunjan Wadhwa, Independent Scholar, Delhi

5. Generational Communities: Student Activism and the Politics of Becoming in South Asia

Dr Jean-Thomas Martelli, Head Researcher at the Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) in New Delhi.

6. Serving the Post-Colonial State: Indian Youth and National Development

Thomas Wilkinson, PhD scholar, Department of International History, The London School of Economics and Political Science

13.00pm-14.00 pm – Lunch

14:00pm-15.30pm

Session 3: Skilling and Aspirations in Contemporary India

Discussant: Dr Anandini Dar, Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University

7. Developmental Discourses and Psycho-educational Interventions: Producing 'Resilient' or 'Risky' Childhoods?

Dr R. Maithreyi, formerly at the Centre for Budget Studies, Bengaluru

8. Developmental Subjects or Aspirational Agents? Centering Student voices in Skills-based Education

Ketaki Prabha, Research Scholar, Centre for Budget Studies, Bengaluru

9. Youths Must Keep 'Upvaluing' Themselves": Of 'Personality Development' and Grooming in Contemporary Delhi

Suchismita Chattopadhyay, PhD scholar, Anthropology, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

15.30pm- 16.45pm

Session 4: Histories, Emotions and Imperialism

Discussant: Dr Divya Kannan, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University

10. Laying the Foundation of the Native Christian Community: A Failed Experiment with Orphans and Orphanages?

Soni, PhD Scholar, Institute of History, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

11. Thinking, Feeling, and Doing: Histories of Childhood and Youth in Africa

Dr Sarah Emily Duff, Assistant Professor of African and World History, Colby College, USA

12. Feeling the Hostel in College Magazines c. 1915 – 1960

Dr Sneha Krishnan, Associate Professor, Human Geography, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford

16.45-17.00pm – Tea/Coffee

17.00 pm- 18.30pm: Room C 021

Keynote Lecture: Prof. Karen Vallgarda, Associate Professor, SAXO Institute, History, University of Copenhagen

Venue for Keynote Lecture: C Block, Ground Floor, Room 021

19.30- 20.30pm Conference Dinner (participants only)

Day 2: January 7 2020

9.45am -11.30 am

Session 5: Representations of Childhood in Performance and Literature

Discussant: Professor Rukmini Sen, Sociology, School of Liberal Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi

- 13. 'Producing' Childhood: The View from Children's Theatre in India** Dr Hia Sen, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Presidency University, Kolkata
- 14. The Child in Childhoods: Representations in Children's Literature**
Najia Zeb, Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi
- 15. The Curious Lessons of Sadhu Kalachand: Storytelling and Pedagogy in Post-colonial India**
Aryak Guha, Assistant Professor, Department of English, S.C College, Kolkata
- 16. Looking back: Memories of South Indian Childhoods**
Catriona Ellis, Assistant Professor, History, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

11.30am - 11.45 am: Tea/Coffee

11.45 am-13.00 pm

Session 6: Children, Community, and Policies of Care

Discussant: Deepti Sachdev, Assistant Professor, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi

- 17. Contesting State's Developmental Agendas through Early Childhood Care and Education: A Case Study of Adivasi Communities from the Nilgiris**
Arun Viknesh, Research Scholar, Centre for Budget Studies, Bangalore
- 18. Negotiating Place, Establishing Identity: A Qualitative Analysis of the Shaping of Educational Experiences by Disabled Children and Their Caregivers**
Kimberly Fernandes, PhD Scholar, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania
- 19. Children And The 'Caring' State: A Gendered Analysis Of Labour And Welfare Capitalism In Colonial India (1880-1930)**
Shreya Kundu, PhD scholar, Department of History, Ashoka University

13.00pm -13.45 pm: Lunch

13.45pm-15.00 pm: **In Conversation: Children's Literature/Publishing in India**

Rukmini Sen, Director Centre for Publishing, Ambedkar University Delhi will be in conversation with Rinchin and Shefalee Jain

Rinchin writes short stories for children as well as for grown-ups and her recent collection of short stories called Ajooba, published by Eklavya is out now. She explores many layers of politics, gender, struggles of everyday lives and love in her stories. Rinchin has been part of many social movements in Chhattisgarh and Madhyapradesh since last two decades and has been working with women and queer groups. She is a member of [Ektara Collective](#). Ektara Collective is an independent, autonomous, non-funded group of people who seek to combine creative efforts and imagination and collaborate with trained and untrained people to make films that are content-wise and aesthetically located in people's subjective, contextual realities and experiences.

Shefalee Jain is an artist based in New Delhi, India. She is currently teaching Visual Art as Assistant Professor at the School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University Delhi. She is the Co founder of BlueJackal, a platform for engaging with and creating visual narratives, comics, picture books and initiating dialogue and learning within these contexts through interactive programs. She occasionally writes and illustrates for children and adults.

15.00pm- 16.15 pm- **Roundtable: South Asia and Beyond: New Directions and Approaches**

- Dr Hia Sen, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Presidency University, Kolkata
- Dr Sarah Emily Duff, Assistant Professor of African and World History, Colby College, USA
- Dr Shivani Nag Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi
- Dr Anandini Dar Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi (Moderator)

16.15pm-16.30 pm: **Moving ahead and Vote of Thanks**

Professor Rukmini Sen, Sociology, School of Liberal Studies and Director, Centre for Publishing, Ambedkar University, Delhi

16.30pm-16.45 pm: Tea/Coffee

Abstracts of the Papers

International Conference on Childhood, Youth and Identity in South Asia

January 6-7 2020

Session 1: Politics of Schooling and Pedagogic Practices

Discussant: Dr Akash Bhattacharya, School of Education, Azim Premji University

Educational Journeys of Muslim Girls in a Madrasa and Making of Islamic Womanhood

Hem Borker, Assistant Professor, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jamia Millia Islamia

This paper draws on my ethnographic monograph about the everyday lives of girls in madrasa Jamia-tul-Mominaat, a residential girls' madrasa in Delhi. Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork, I trace the educational journeys and aspirations of young adolescent Muslim girls to womanhood. I focus on the unfolding of young girls' lives as they transition from home to madrasa and beyond. Bringing together the concepts of community, piety and aspiration, I highlight the fluidity of the ideal of perfect Muslim woman. I examine how education becomes a site where the meaning of what constitutes an ideal Muslim woman is negotiated in the everyday lives of madrasa girls. At one level, girls value and adopt practices taught in the madrasa as essential to practice of piety (amal). At another level, there is a greater tactical aspect to cultivating one's identity as a madrasa-educated Muslim girl. By highlighting the everyday ambiguities that madrasa education brings in its wake, the paper uncovers new understandings of girls' Islamic education, understandings that diverge significantly from the madrasas and even girls' parents. It demonstrates the manner in which education in girls' madrasas is contributing to the construction of a new kind of 'educated Muslim women' in India.

Constructions of Childhood in the Government School Spaces of Delhi

Shailly Kumar, PhD scholar, Women and Gender Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi

This paper will focus on construction of childhood in Government school spaces of Delhi. The primary socialization of child begins within the family where the child learns to interact and understands himself or herself as a girl or boy. At the age of four to five children are formally admitted to school education where they broaden their horizon by interacting with teachers, peer group and other staff members. The child in school belongs to different socio-economic backgrounds and hence, every child has a different exposure and interpretation of their life. The experience of childhood is not uniform; it varies according to his or her caste, religion, region and gender etc. The main focus of this paper is on the construction of childhood among boys and girls as internalized in their

behavior as boyhood and girlhood respectively. The aim of this paper is to present the life situations and exposures of school going children in the age group of 10-14 years which leads to construction of multiple childhoods. The emphasis is on the need to explain how school, through formal and informal curriculum, creates the gendered childhood through which girls and boys internalize the differential behavior patterns and attitudes in their personalities as they conform to the masculine and feminine traits approved by society. This paper will unfold the issues and concerns around the gendered and notion of multiple childhoods. These require serious attention from various policy makers and stakeholders in order to make the childhood stage comfortable and uncover the full potential of the child to make him or her a productive member of the society and lead a successful life thereafter.

Clean bodies in School: children's negotiations with sartorial and material discourses of hygiene, Tamil Nadu

Smruthi Bala Kannan, PhD scholar, Department of Childhood Studies, Rutgers Camden College of Arts and Sciences

Media, activist, and academic texts on sanitation and schooling in “developing countries” have predominantly focused on the relationship between school or home environment and children’s bodies through notions of safety in the realm of “hygienic” and the risk of the “contagious”. These texts often portray school-going children both as vulnerable at the moment and the as ‘promise’ of a collective and improved future. Hence, children figure both as recipients of instruction on embodied and environmental cleanliness as well as serve as the rationale for why a society needs better sanitation.

In this paper, I explore features such as school uniform, specific hairstyles and the writing tools used in the school as symbols of a “clean-bodies in school”. While these symbols are intertwined with discourses of cleanliness, health, and hygiene, I discuss ways in which the participants of my research negotiate these sartorial, material, and spatial discourses of health and cleanliness in their daily experiences through play, humor, and the subtle material choices they make. I argue that reading these children’s negotiations of such discourses alongside the texts that they draw from helps us place binaries such as present/future, adult/child, hygienic/contagious and safety/risk in productive ambiguity and reveal the complex cultural networks in which “clean bodies in school” are embedded.

Session 2: Youth, Nation, and the Development Question

Discussant: Dr Iman Mitra, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University

Serving the Post-Colonial State: Indian Youth and National Development

Thomas Wilkinson, PhD scholar, Department of International History, The London School of Economics and Political Science

The history of the Indian youth in the early post-colonial period remains unexplored. In recent years, scholars have examined youth political and volunteer movements during the freedom struggle. Yet, they have overlooked how this social group was mobilised, imagined and negotiated in the early postcolonial period. This paper will explore the relationship between the Indian youth, the state (s) and the development of India. I will argue the Indian youth became central to the “developmentalism imagination” that prevailed. Following independence, the Government of India sought to negotiate novel spaces of youth in an attempt to harness this social group's energies for national development. The Bharat Sevak Samaj, the largest volunteer organisation in the 1950s, mobilised Indian youth *en masse* to propagate and be of assistance to the National Development Plan. The introduction of Labour and Social Service camps put youth to work on construction projects across rural India. As the Bharat Scouts and the YMCA became incorporated into the Five Year Plans, these youth movements arranged youth labour camps at the behest of the central government. Moreover, the National Cadet Core and the Auxiliary Cadet Corp were established and expanded to remedy the supposed inadequate physical condition of the Indian youth. Developmentalism and the (imagined) physical strength of youth became entangled. Independence created a new relevance for this life stage. The post-childhood passage to adulthood became a space for negotiating a future generation of citizens and imagining the future of India

Generational Communities: Student Activism and the Politics of Becoming in India

Jean-Thomas Martelli , Head Researcher at the Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) in New Delhi.

Are their political afterlives? This preliminary ethnographic account explores the transition of youth from student activism to politics beyond the campus years. It engages with the emerging career of Ajay, a secular left student leader turned politician in North India during the 2019 parliamentary elections. The paper indicates that the transition between these two adjacent realms of public participation revolves around more than simply the actualization of political capital. It examines the generational renewal of Indian democracy from a micro-perspective through making sense of the concept of ‘netaization’, that is the process of becoming a political leader. Locating instrumental unlearning as core to netaization, the article discusses the way value-based strands of student activism are practically renegotiated to adjust to the grammar of electoral politics. By comparing the political metamorphosis of Ajay with the cohort of activists who “passed out” of university along with him, the article outlines the durable

biographical effects of political self-fashioning acquired on campus while pointing out the transient character of its performative stances. Ajay's trajectory towards 'netaization' is seen from the point of view of the 'invisibilization' (i.e. activist's demobilization) and 'institutionalization' (i.e. professionalization of activism) of the activist group he grew up with. The paper ends by depicting instrumental unlearning as a strategy to neutralise Indian majoritarian politics through tactically mimicking certain rhetorical features, while at the same time opposing the consolidation of the religious vote and the criminalization of non-Hindutva youth activism. It suggests that the strategic unmaking of the activist ethos creates a temporary possibility of political representation. Indeed, the liminal space between the activist and the neta offers the possibility for Ajay to incarnate both, tapping into an imaginary of 'pure' political engagement as well as the promises of political patronage.

(Un)Contested temporalities: Navigating Adivasi youth identities in a local village community in India

Gunjan Wadhwa, Independent Scholar, Delhi

In this paper, I emphasise the dominance of colonial/temporal discourses of development in the production of Adivasi youth identities through education in a local village community in India. I signal the centrality of temporality, progress and change, as integral to the development and modernisation discourses, in Adivasi youth 'voices' in articulation of their identity as 'backward'. By drawing on official state policy and data excerpts, I illustrate how the Adivasi youths reiterate the dominant view of development which invokes referring to themselves in deficit. However, I argue that the taking up of normative discourses by Adivasi youths is indicative of their resistance to the regulatory categories installed to produce the Adivasis into a deficit social position. This paper focuses on empirical research, as part of my doctoral study at University of Sussex (2014- 2019), which took place through in-depth interviews and focus groups with both Adivasi and non- Adivasi groups in a local village community, policy review, observations and a researcher diary. The analysis is framed by post-structural theorisations of data, informed by postcolonial and feminist literature.

Session 3: Skilling and Aspirations in Contemporary India

Discussant: Dr Anandini Dar, Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University

Developmental Discourses and Psycho-educational Interventions: Producing 'Resilient' or 'Risky' Childhoods?

R. Maithreyi, formerly at the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru

The paper traces the confluence of developmental discourses of psychology and economic

discourses of human capital formation, and the ways in which they come together to produce the ideals for children's development. Institutionalised through fields such as education, health and development, these ideals are ones that bind children's present to their imagined futures as productive adults; and link children's development to national and international developmental goals. Critically examining the nature of knowledge, and the language of these developmental discourses surrounding childhood, the paper seeks to problematise the ontological validity accorded to these knowledge claims, in accordance with which childhood and youth are regulated in specific ways. Making an argument for viewing these disciplinary knowledges on children's development as socially produced and historically located, I present a study of a popular psycho-educational intervention called Life Skills Education (LSE) in this paper, in order to illustrate this point. Advocated by international development agencies and professional networks to keep children and youth on a 'positive trajectory of growth', LSE interventions seek to empower young people and develop resilience in them in order to help them manage contemporary conditions of structural risks and uncertainties, and the disintegrating effects of modernity. Genealogically tracing LSE to the paradigmatic shifts in the discourses and practices of psychology, with the neoliberal turn in the 1980s, I show how a set of self-management skills that have become important to the new economy, have also come to be positioned as critical to children's development.

Examining psychological literature and field data on life skills education closely, I highlight three significant trends that characterise psychological and developmental interventions, through which programmes such as LSE are deployed to reorient children's selves in accordance with the demands of the global neoliberal economy. These include the construction of all children's everyday lives and development as 'risky' by recasting structural risks as individual ones of self-management; the broadening of psycho-therapeutic intervention to all population as a 'preventive' approach on account of these 'risks' faced by all young people; and positioning of therapeutic interventions as everyday practice required to manage these conditions, thus making psychological regulation perpetual. Further, while the risks faced are generalised, I show how the knowledges and skills identified to manage these risks are specific, and draw upon certain class (and caste) specific knowledges, attitudes and mannerisms, thus constituting specific groups of children as 'risky' or 'resilient' based on their 'life skills'. Presenting how specific childhoods come to be, thus, constituted through a deficit discourse, I draw attention to the politics of international development and academic production of knowledge, through which non-elite childhoods are further marginalised.

Youths Must Keep 'Upvaluing' Themselves": Of 'Personality Development' and Grooming in Contemporary Delhi

Suchismita Chattopadhyay, PhD scholar, Anthropology, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

The New Economic Reforms of 1991 signaled the beginning of a consumption driven economy. New sites of leisure enabled a production of celebration and consumption. Commodities also demand a visibility of consumption. The youth and aspiring members of the new middle class must know how to ‘speak’ and ‘read’ the language of urban spaces like malls and coffee shops as well. What essentially starts unravelling here is the performative aspect of consumption. One’s status and class is made visible via the space they inhabit. In order to nourish the aspirations of a globalised economy with skill sets suited for a global market, grooming schools have become very popular in Delhi. The grooming schools, especially with their focus on the youth, claim to “transform lives” and “polish personalities to a global level”. This paper is based on the ethnography of one such grooming school in Delhi, where all the students were below the age of twenty-four years. What is the significance of a pedagogy invested in teaching them “personality development”, “international etiquette”, “personalised English conversation” and “interview skills training” in an age of ‘self-help’ and ‘self-development’? How do grooming schools create new bodily dispositions and impart a sense of belonging to urban and cosmopolitan sites for social classes until now distant from such spaces? Most importantly, how is the aspirational youth fashioned in these spaces and what impact does it have on our existing understanding of self- hood and labour in the ‘neoliberal’ paradigm?

Developmental Subjects or Aspirational Agents? Centering Student voices in Skills-based Education

Ketaki Prabha, Research Scholar, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru

Interest in youth has been focused on harnessing their potential as workers and citizens, as exemplified through skills-based educational and training programmes. With India’s demographic dividend projected to accelerate economic growth, there is an increasing urgency with which the youth are sought to be skilled in order to maximize their productive capacities. Under vocational training oriented towards industry-relevant skills, this instrumental approach views youth merely as inputs for human resource planning. Ostensibly articulated as a welfare scheme, vocational education offered in government schools targets a population of disadvantaged students ‘at risk of dropping out’ to provide them with skills-training for alternative routes into employment. However, while the state views students as passive beneficiaries of skilling programmes, students themselves construct their own futures and their relationship with precarious circumstances in different ways.

This paper draws on insights from an ethnographic study of students of vocational education programmes in government schools in Bangalore, and discusses the aspirations and strategies of students as they navigate these programmes, specifically in relation to their socio-economic contexts. By highlighting young students as agents with aspirations for mobility in spite of the constraints of structural inequalities, the paper seeks to

establish how students actively negotiate their futures in ways that diverge from the state's imagination of them as developmental subjects.

Session 4: Histories, Emotions and Imperialism

Discussant: Dr Divya Kannan, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Shiv Nadar University

Laying the Foundation of the Native Christian Community: A Failed Experiment with Orphans and Orphanages?

Soni, PhD Scholar, Institute of History, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

The paper traces the history of Church Missionary Society's (CMS) work amongst famine orphans and orphanages from the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries in India. It is mostly a case study of Secundra Orphanage in Agra, North-Western Provinces (NWP), and Sharanpur Orphanage in Nasik, Bombay — two of the most famous and well-documented CMS orphanages in north and western India. Orphanages were one of the very first institutions, along with schools, with which the CMS began their missionary work in India. While schools in missiology have garnered much attention, orphanages as a distinct category of missionary work remain understudied. The essay will examine the emergence of orphanage work as a distinct method of evangelization amongst CMS missionaries, which, although began with much enthusiasm, saw a gradual disillusionment by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the course of mapping the debate amongst the CMS missionaries on the relevance of orphanage work, I also examine how shifting notions of childhood for children of the marginal classes in the subcontinent had an impact on the way the CMS missionaries criticized the orphanage system. Additionally, through my case study of CMS work amongst orphans, the paper also contributes to the already rich historiographical debate on the role of Christian missionaries in the grand imperial project.

Thinking, Feeling, and Doing: Histories of Childhood and Youth in Africa

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Since at least the 1960s, scholars of colonial and postcolonial Africa have produced a rich body of research focusing especially on questions of generation in African societies, and on the political organising and resistance of youth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, with the emergence of a reinvigorated field of the history of childhood and youth internationally in the 1990s, historians of Africa have begun to pay closer attention to the changing meanings of age categories over time and place. More specifically, they have returned to the question of agency within the broader historiography on the continent, demonstrating how narrow definitions of agency-as-resistance might limit the study of childhood and youth on the continent.

As a result, recent scholarship on the history of childhood and youth in Africa has worked to include younger children and girls, and has been interested in a wider array of research questions. One of these is the history of the emotions. Scholars at work on childhood and youth have begun to use the insights developed by historians of the emotions internationally to draw attention to how children, for instance, navigated the institutions of colonial and postcolonial rule, the experience of conversion to Christianity, and formed romantic relationships.

The purpose of this paper is to serve as an introduction to the historiography on childhood and youth in colonial and postcolonial Africa, with a particular emphasis on more recent research on this topic. It uses the history of the emotions to illuminate this scholarship, and suggests how the field might draw together work being done on both Africa and south Asia.

Feeling the Hostel in College Magazines c. 1915 – 1960

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This paper examines narratives of feeling around hostel life that emerge from College Magazines published by women's colleges in erstwhile Madras in this period. In doing so it makes two key arguments. The paper first examines the way in which the hostel is set up as a place of girlish feeling: emotions that are improper for adulthood find a place in the hostel and in the genre of hostel-writing in magazines that straddles fiction with memoir. Here the hostel emerges as a final frontier of an imaginative childhood world where improper feelings, unsuited to respectable middle-class adulthood might be left behind. Second the paper asks how the hostel as a community of feeling emerges in this writing. The hostel, I argue, emerges as a site where modern girlhood is articulated as necessarily produced through the community of the institution and through the cultivation of close friendships and relationships of affection among residents in the hostel.

Session 5: Representations of Childhood in Performance and Literature

Discussant: Prof. Rukmini Sen, Sociology, School of Liberal Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi

'Producing' Childhood: The View from Children's Theatre in India

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The proposed paper is an attempt to understand childhood by exploring theatrical productions in urban India, which are classified as children's theatre. By studying how childhood and the child are visualized, understood, and effected in productions, it proposes an understanding from the context of enactments and theatrical abilities. The

reflection on the shortcomings of the “new” Childhood Studies raises certain questions regarding the diffuse assumptions about the ontology of the child and how best categories like “agency” or “generational order” can be translated into empirical research. This paper engages with some of these questions based on my fieldwork on children’s theatre in India. It examines questions of embodiment, and a logic of semblance that underpins the cast, especially when regional tropes of childhood or the ideology of the theatre company demand a certain physical imagination of the child and of childhood. It looks at pragmatic and tactical appraisal of the age-based skills of actors portraying child characters, based on interviews and observations in the field. Through an engagement with questions of who can and cannot enact childhood which emerge from the field, this paper will contribute to the understanding who the child is and how it comes to be “produced” even if only from the context of performance.

The Child in Childhoods: Representations in Children’s Literature

Najia Zeb, Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi

Literature, in general, and children’s literature, in particular, is an important avenue to build shared understandings of the socially and culturally constructed category of ‘childhoods’. Childhood is a complex and evolving domain which shifts from perceiving children as social investments, tabula rasa and essentially good to a more complex amalgam of negotiations and ambivalence. The paper attempts to demonstrate how two South Asian children’s literature represent the child in childhoods. *Toto-Chan: The Little Girl At The Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi and *Malgudi Schooldays: The Adventures of Swami and his Friends* by R.K. Narayan, written in the 1900s, represent children as agentic and independent thinking beings, negotiating their lives in complex and nuanced ways. The paper explores children’s literature as a specialized demarcated field of study. These books written by adults about children and for, children as well as adults are useful in educational studies as narratives to understand children. The adult gaze and its multiple audiences require careful deconstruction of its imageries to perceive childhoods. The paper also apprehends these two narratives of the ‘modern institution of schools’ and ‘play’, both significant characteristics associated with children, as a window into the lived world of childhoods. These narratives are also linked to a nation’s imaginations of its citizenry. The agentic child in these narratives is the new reality, reshaping cultural and political imaginations of South Asian childhoods and its realities.

The Curious Lessons of Sadhu Kalachand: Storytelling and Pedagogy in Post-colonial India

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Classrooms are usually about the pedagogy and rote-learning of correct facts served from the podium. We might think that the days of Dr. Gradgrind [in *Hard Times*] are long

gone, but the reality in most ex-colonies and some parts of the Anglo-American world, suggests otherwise. Lessons are often rigid, pedantic and promote values that are considered useful and productive for the student, initiating her/his training as a 'good' citizen-subject.

Drawing on a set of school-stories about a young adult boy growing up in the suburbs of Bengal, the paper highlights the remarkable (fictional) career of the main protagonist Sadhu Kalachand, as a 'juvenile delinquent' and then, ironically, as a class teacher in a primary school – a job he secures by lying while absconding from home. In particular, I look at the story that Kalachand fabricates about his own childhood and how the locale [of the school] received its name - an 'original/originary' tale full of fabulous details, such as surfing on sea with baby dolphins and his desultory wanderings in the province. Kalachand thus brings a counterfactual story and an incredible geography of the place into play, a limit-history pace Borges that subverts/rewrites the realist codes/tropes/terms of institutional historical knowledge. Incidentally, the author Shyamal Gangopadhyay wrote these stories in the tumultuous years of 1970s-80s, marked by radical left student movements against the education, economic and linguistic policies of the postcolonial state. A fresh look at the narrative strategies and the historical context of these stories – a web of stories-within-a-story – about growing up, schooling, and eccentric self-fashioning, I suggest, shows us glimpses of an art of being ungoverned.

Looking back: Memories of South Indian Childhoods

Catriona Ellis, Assistant Professor, History, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

At a time when participation rights are key to the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Child, recognising children as contributors to historical processes and searching for children's voices in the past seems to be a politically imperative, although methodologically challenging, project. Looking in detail at the childhood memories of three South Indians this paper considers what we can learn about experiences of children in the 1930s, with a particular focus on how they saw their roles as children and how this intersected with other gendered, racialized, religious, geographic and caste based identities. The paper is based on the autobiographies of three public figures – former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, civil servant A.N. Sattianathan and feminist M. Subbamma – and reflects not only their childhood experiences of schooling, work and family but also on how their later adult experience impacted the memories of their childhoods and reveals the complex possibilities and limitations of the source material.

Session 6: Children, Community, Policies of Care and State Welfare

Discussant: Deepti Sachdev, Assistant Professor, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi

Negotiating Place, Establishing Identity: A Qualitative Analysis of the Shaping of Educational Experiences by Disabled Children and Their Caregivers

Kimberly Fernandes, PhD Scholar, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

How do disabled children participate in and negotiate their own educational experiences? What are some of the ways in which childhood is constituted for disabled children in the Indian context, and how do these particular notions of childhood shape ideas of educational achievement? To explore these questions, this paper will offer an analysis of interactions between disabled children, their parents and educators in both educational settings that are explicitly designed to be inclusive and those that are not. While the paper will outline some of the dominant narratives originating from the bio-medical model that are often taken up and produced in both home and school settings, it will also move beyond this model. It shall do so by analyzing recent ethnographic data to highlight how both children and their caregivers respond to, wrestle with and continually negotiate the socio-political pressures generated by these narratives.

Given the significant diversity in the experiences of disabled children as well as the many constructions of both childhood and disability, this work will employ methods that pay careful attention to creating spaces where the voices of disabled children are prioritized. Subsequently, the paper will turn to a discussion of some of the ways in which disabled children and their caregivers make meaning of some of their current educational experiences while continuing to compose others that are able to better meet their needs. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the forms of social and community support that enable the co-construction and re- shaping of disabled children's educational experiences.

Children And The 'Caring' State: A Gendered Analysis Of Labour And Welfare Capitalism In Colonial India (1880-1930)

Shreya Kundu, PhD scholar, Department of History, Ashoka University

Focusing on laboring children in colonial India, this research attempts to explore how far the state used its welfare paternalistic policies to intervene in the utilization of children in the labour force. Along with this, the paper seeks to understand how the state dealt with the conflict between the welfarist capitalist development and the maintenance of its in-built colonial interests. Could the protectionist legislative state apparatus actually provide 'protection' to this 'special class' of labour or did the porousness of those legislations expose the true nature of the absolutist imperial state in the guise of benevolent paternalism?. It aims to analyze the government's role in shaping the children's labour

market, wage-pattern, employment rate, housing facility, social security services within the broader issue of political economy of the colonial capitalism entrenched in the ideology of utilitarianism. In the nineteenth century, the general anxieties of colonialism accompanied by a rapid advent of modernity and the societal reconstruction of different classes, there also emerged the discourse of the sentimentalization of children and childhood. This kind of ideological paradigm constructed childhood as an idealized space and was made the most desired subject in many policy-making and welfare measures. Rather too quickly, Indian children became the responsibilities of the state and destiny of the nation. Within this paradigm, I try to show how colonialism's essentialist and exclusionist policies bracketed women and children as the 'special classes of labour'. Moreover, the ways by which the continuous processes of colonial knowledge production and their certain categorizations led to the compartmentalization of women and children workers in the labour related policy formulations thus making them 'eligible' for protectionist measures of the government. How did these protectionist measures construct a colonial mechanism to subjugate child labourers more by making them vulnerable and susceptible to the mill managers and factory supervisors can be discerned from the empirical analysis.

Contesting State's Developmental Agendas through Early Childhood Care and Education: A Case Study of Adivasi Communities from the Nilgiris

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Investments in early childhood care and education (ECCE) have gained international and national priority since the 2000s. Against this context, this paper contrasts state programmes for early childhood development with parents' and local communities' priorities for children's development, drawing on an ethnographic study with Adivasi communities in Gudalur, in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has been active and efficient in its welfare provisions for children and this is visible through its child development indicators. State goals of ECCE focus on making the child 'school ready', following universalistic models of 'developmentally appropriate practices'. Adivasi communities, on the other hand, make demands for education informed by local ecologies, knowledge systems, and practices. By demanding education that not only centres their cultures, but also engages with their politics, the paper discusses how Adivasi communities challenge the state's conceptions of education, that cater to narrow economic ends. It identifies the expectations of children that emerges in the interactions between state and communities conceptions of childhood.