



CONTEMPORARY INDIA STUDY CENTRE AARHUS



Workshop on “Social In- and Exclusion in contemporary India and beyond”

Organised by the Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus (CISCA), Department of History and Area Studies, Aarhus University

23rd / 24th of April, 2010

Call for papers

For this workshop we invite original empirical and theoretical contributions focussing on the mechanisms, politics as well as histories of two processes of social in- and exclusion – often occurring simultaneously. It is meant to explore the ways in which various boundaries have been maintained, but have been also eroded or new lines of distinction have been invented as well as contested – often accompanied by tensions, conflicts or even violence.

The processes of in- and exclusion can be studied in a number of contexts, including (but not limited to):

- Castes and the caste system. India has, for instance over the last decades witnessed a process whereby communities have forged alliances, more recently also from the opposite ends of the caste hierarchy (“social engineering”), against rivalling “others” (e.g. in order to contain the rise of the Other Backward Classes). These rather recent processes of uniting, yet distinguishing castes, caste conglomerates etc. politically are often linked to, but may also stand in contrast to the ideological foundations of a caste system (such as an “encompassing of the contraries”).
- Socio-religious identities. For example, an inclusive Hindu identity Hindu-nationalists seek to create with reference to a sacred land excludes and often demonizes “others” whose faith does not originate in India. Similar processes occur in other nationalist, regionalist and nativist movements.

- Democratic institutions and economic constraints. A democratic set-up, however culturally inflected, offers certain opportunity structures conducive for changes in society, which may privilege some, but may also marginalize others. The recently postulated Government policy of “inclusive growth” specifically aimed at benefitting not only a growing middle class, but the proverbial *aam admi* or common man, may have – even if unintended – adverse effects as well. Developments in India continue to lead to land displacement, environmental pollution and other conditions affecting and facilitating processes of social in- and exclusion in India.

Given the global economic links, the contemporary mobility and connectivity - not only of capital, but people - we cannot limit our focus to the territorial boundaries of the Indian subcontinent, but would explicitly broaden our approach to diasporic and transnational practices of in- and exclusion often shaping developments in India itself (e.g. the influence of long-distance nationalisms).

During the workshop we would like to take a fresh look at the contemporary Indian society and beyond – now entering a post-recession phase. The workshop will offer the opportunity for a stocktaking of the often contradictory processes of in- and exclusion, to revisit some of the above mentioned academic debates and for a discussion on newly emerging and newly contested identities. Accordingly, we invite research-based papers from a wide range of disciplines dealing with the subject such as Indian / South Asian Studies, Science of Religion, History, Political Science, Anthropology, Economics, Media Studies etc.

Please send your abstract to CISCA@hum.au.dk. Deadline for submission of abstracts: 25th of March, 2010.