

Abstracts



Civic Engagement among Lower-Caste Muslims in Postcolonial India – A Study of the Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz

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This presentation will focus on the activities of a loose coalition of lower-caste Muslim groups in postcolonial India– the *Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz* (English: Backward Muslim Forum). The *Mahaz* is critical of both the traditional socioreligious, *Ashraf* elite of the Muslim community as well of the postcolonial state. With regards to the state, its major claim has been on its policies of affirmative action as well as on representation in official bodies. It seeks state recognition of the Dalit status of lower-caste Muslim groups. The presentation will chart out the evolution of this movement in the postcolonial set-up, against the larger backdrop of Indian politics.

Witnessing Kashmir in New Literature: Narratives of Horrorism in a Necropolitical Postcoloniality

Amrita Ghosh

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Amidst the ongoing conflict for the past seventy-one years, there has recently been a plethora of writing from/on Kashmir, in English, that has recently emerged as a significant presence in literature. In this talk, I turn to some of this new literature that emerges in a unique space, perhaps one that highlights an impoverishment in our taxonomies to study a conflict zone within a postcolonial space like Kashmir. I study this literature to move beyond the frames of biopolitical and necropolitical space and discuss the need to study Kashmir as a unique postcoloniality. Analyzing the narratives of power and violence in some

texts, I argue how postcolonial horror is redefined in Kashmir's conflict zone.

Measuring Justice in India: Competing Methodologies for Understanding whether the Law works for Everyone

Siddharth Peter De Souza

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In this presentation, I will examine different ways in which the performance of the legal system in India is quantified and measured. Through an analysis of competing models of indicators and quantification tools, I will examine the ways in which legal needs are understood and the implications that this has for 'rule of law reform', 'global governance' and 'legal pluralism'. My presentation draws from my PhD research which examines the politics behind legal indicators and an audit culture in law.

Sky-High Rainbow Lakes- Exploring the Allegories and Realities of Water

Jaya Upadhyay

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Major rivers in Southeast Asia like the Ganges, Mekong, Yangtze, Amu Darya, Hindal and Yellow River originate in the high-altitude wetlands in the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau. Given the significance of these wetlands, it is well recognized that integrated wetland management strategies should adapt to the changing climate so that the wetland ecosystem services are least affected. I explore and document the local traditional knowledge and management systems in relation to the high-altitude wetlands in Arunachal Pradesh, a remote Northeastern Indian state bordering Bhutan and China. I also aim to examine how the existing ecological and socio-cultural aspects of these wetlands are reflected and incorporated in the regional and national climate adaptation plans and policies.