NR01 / THE POLITICS OF POLICY: PLURIVERSAL KNOWLEDGES AND THE POST-COLONIAL STATE IN INDIA

Topic : Research

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This panel will aim to explore the possible ways in which the politics of policy—making, executing and analysing— has been done with respect to specific areas of pluriversal knowledges that the post-colonial state in India committed to.

Applying the broad perspective of discourse analysis, a number of knowledge systems will be analysed, that do not necessarily feature as the most significant or flagship initiatives of the state, but are very much part of documents and financial allocations. Policy documents will be examined systematically, locating the core methods of making and evaluating policy in the context of larger political developments in India. Also, more than broad political shifts will be included—bringing in the shifting power structures at regional and local levels, and if possible, to a limited extent, the responses of policy to local collective action on these knowledges.

The presenters will respond to the following questions:

i. Which policy documents would you identify with the pluriversal knowledge you have studied, over the eight decades of the post-colonial period?

ii. Delineate the broad and some specific political contexts of the making of these documents --their unique positioning of the knowledge system and the expectations of what they could do in the larger development narrative?

iii. What potential did these policies ascribe to these knowledges in improving the lives of the people who were known to practice them? And how did these play out in application?

iv. In the light of the climate crisis and the urgent need for pathways of responses, where do you think these pluriversal knowledges can contribute, and what would be the role for state policy in that?

Pluriversal knowledges have been debated as ‘traditional’ knowledges for the longest time, in terms of ‘preserving’ identity and culture, but this panel will argue for recognising them as dynamic, ecologically grounded, climate-resilient, climate-sensitive knowledge systems, that have great value to provide pathways to respond to the climate crisis. Hence the shift of the nomenclature to ‘pluriversal’, that better signifies their potential to the future, rather than hearkening to the glory of their past. This is evident in the reality that they are put to use systematically still, by ordinary people. So the slip of policy in underestimating their value and yoking their potential for the better life for the people, needs to be examined systematically – for better futures.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Already identified possible papers, the titles of the paper proposals and the names of authors with their affiliations.

1. Sushma Kumari (Doctoral Student, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi), The Politics of Policy: Handloom in post-colonial India

2. Chanderkala Yadav(Doctoral Student, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi), The Politics of Policy: Groundwater and the Textile Industry in post-colonial India

3. Devahuti Sarkar (Doctoral Student, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi), The Politics of Policy: Agroecology in post-colonial India

4. Akshay Bhambri (Doctoral Student, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi), The Politics of Policy: Significant Differences between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda in post-revolutionary/post-colonial India