



# **Performative Communication**

## *Culture and Politics in South Asia*

20-21 January, 2015

a two-day International Seminar co-organized by



**Department of Sociology, South Asian University**

&

**Center for Culture Media & Governance, JMI**

In association with

**Indian Council of Social Science Research**

**Day-1: 20th January 2015**

**Venue: Tagore Hall, Dayar-E- Mir Taqi Mir**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

**Dr. Dev Pathak, Department of Sociology, South Asian University &  
Dr. Athikho Kaissi, Center for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia**

### **Inaugural Session (10:10am-11:00am)**

Chair: Prof. Talat Ahmed, Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia

Prof. Steven Mc Dowell, Florida State University

Keynote Address: Combining the Global and the National in Indian Media and Politics: The Performance of Personal and National Redefinition.

Expectations & Objectives: Prof. Sasanka Perera, South Asian University & Prof. Biswajit Das, Center for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia

TEA (11:00 am -11:30 am)

### **Plenary Session (11:30 am-1:00pm): Rethinking Performance**

Chair: Lisa Trivedi, Hamilton College, New York

Rapporteur: Ms. Kumud Bhansali, Department of Sociology, South Asian University

Prof. Sasanka Perera, South Asian University- Performing Terror, Screening Violence

Ms. Madiha Aijaz, Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi- Photographs, Locations in devotional, Ritualistic performances

Dr. Veena Naregal, CSDS- Regional Theatre Histories as Cultural Archive

Dr. Lion Koenig, University of Heidelberg- Performing to belong: The Negotiation of Citizenship in the Cultural Sphere



LUNCH BREAK (1:00 pm - 2:00 pm)

Parallel Sessions: 2:00 pm-3:30pm

Venue: Tagore Hall

<b>Panel 1A–Language, signs and symbols</b>	<b>Panel 1B- Myth and Narratives</b>
<i>Chair – Dr. Chudamani Basnet, Department of Sociology, South Asian University</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms. Sabiha Majid, CSSS, JNU</i>	<i>Chair – Dr. Vibodh Parthasarathy, CCMG, JMI</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms. Avanti Chhatre, Department of Sociology, South Asian University</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Brahm Prakash, JNU-Have the guts to perform: Visceral communication in Doogola</li><li>• Dr. Chandrani Chatterjee, University of Pune- Translation in/as performance</li><li>• Dr. Jayanta Vishnu Das, Tezpur University-Protests, Resistance and Violence: The collective performance of everyday images in Manipur</li><li>• Ms. Ritu Sinha, JNU-Hindu art and the performative politics of the Gita press</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Aruna Bommareddi, IAS, Shimla-Of the narrative, culture and politics</li><li>• Mr. AP Rajaram, JNU- Myth, prop, dance connecting the tradition through body</li><li>• Ms. Manpreet Kaur, Columbia University – Mardana Ke- Performinmg self through performance in Punjab’s Naqal tradition</li></ul>

TEA (3:30 pm - 4:00 pm)

4:00pm-5:00pm

**Panel 2: Institutions, Practices and Ethos**

Chair: Prof. Sasanka Perera, South Asian University

Rapporteur: Ms. Nilanjana Sen, Department of International Relations, South Asian University

1. Dr. Neshat Quaiser, JMI- Urdu theatre public sphere in 19<sup>th</sup> century Bihar: Strategies of reinvention and renegotiation
2. Dr. Lisa Trivedi, Hamilton College, New York-Depicting labour, Performing labour: Working women in Pranal K. Patel’s Jyoti Sangh Series
3. Mr. Vibodh Parthasarathi, CCMG, JMI- The Performer Commodified: The recasting of the performed in early music recording
4. Dr. Gopalan Ravindran, University of Madras- Drumming for performative identities by the Dalits of Tamil Nadu and Burakus of Japan

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## Day 2 - 21<sup>st</sup> January - 2015

### Inaugural Session (10:00am-11:00am)

Chair: Prof. Steven Mc Dowell, Florida State University

Prof. Shiv Visvanathan, OPJ Global University

Keynote address: Guerilla and the Satyagrahi: Politics, Performance in contemporary times

TEA (11:00am-11:30am)

Parallel Sessions: (11:30am -1:00pm)

Venue: TBC

<p><b>Panel 3A – Culture, Power and Resistance</b> <i>Chair – Dr. Sanjeev KP, Department of International relations, South Asian University</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms. Utsha Mitra, Department of Sociology, South Asian University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Nadeem, DU &amp; Ms. Juanita Kakoty, JNU- Dastaangoi: Text and Performance</li><li>• Ms. Asha Singh, TISS – Bhojpuri folk songs and women: Performance of absent conjugality</li><li>• Ms. Amrita Datta, JNU – Koothrapalli, Desai and Kapoor, Indian Diaspora in America Sitcoms</li><li>• Ms. Saumya Saloni, SAU- Theatre of Resistance in the time of Globalization</li></ul>	<p><b>Panel 3B – Culture, Power and Resistance</b> <i>Chair – Dr. Lion Koenig, University of Heidelberg</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms Ankita Menon, CSSS, JNU</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Ratan Kr. Roy, SAU- Performative Shahbag, debating culture and politics of youth in contemporary Bangladesh</li><li>• Dr. Rashi Bhargava, DU- Exploring Civil Society as a performative site: Case study from contemporary Nagaland</li><li>• Dr. Manas Kr. Ghosh, Jadavpur University- Political economy of performance in Satyajit Ray's Urban trilogy of the 1970s</li><li>• Ms. Vaishali Raghuvanshi &amp; Dr. Sanjeev Kr. HM, SAU- Images of Pakistan in Bollywood Cinema</li></ul>
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LUNCH BREAK (1:00 pm - 2:00 pm)

Parallel Sessions: (2:00 pm -3:30 pm)

Venue: TBC

<p><b>Panel 4A – India and South Asia: Identity and Subjectivity</b> <i>Chair – Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Tribhuvan University, Nepal</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms. Ekta Jain, CSSS, JNU</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Amiya Kr. Das, Tezpur University- Polls, performance and citizenship an exploration in India's North East</li><li>• Dr. Urmimala Sarkar, JNU– Bollywood dances and the construction of glocal dancing bodies</li><li>• Dr. Sharmila Chottaray, Tripura University- Locating hybridity in popular Odia jatra</li></ul>	<p><b>Panel 4B – India and South Asia: Culture and Resilience</b> <i>Chair – Dr. Shiva Rijal, Tribhuvan University, Nepal</i> <i>Rapporteur: Ms. Avanti Chhatre, Department of Sociology, South Asian University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Abhijit Roy, Jadavpur University- Performing democracy: Indian news television and its public.</li><li>• Dr. Mandakini Baruah, Tezpur University, - performing puberty rites for constructing female subjectivity: A study with reference to puberty rites in Assam</li><li>• Dr. Otojit Kshetrimayum, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida- Decoding the dynamics of ritual in North East India</li></ul>
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TEA (3:30pm - 4:00pm)

4:00pm-5:00pm

## Concluding Panel –India and South Asia: Constructing Regional Identity

Chair: Dr. Ravi Kumar, Department of Sociology, South Asian University

Rapporteur: Ms. Kumud Bhansali, Department of Sociology, South Asian University

1. Dr. Sanjeev Uprety, Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu- Third genders, pimps and paranoia: Gender performance and contemporary political discourse of Nepal
2. Dr. Rachel Seoighe, JNU- Nationalistic authorship and resistance in Northeastern Sri Lanka
3. Dr. Shiva Rijal, Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu- Castes and immobility: Let's perform rituals.

Vote of Thanks

Dr. Dev Pathak, Department of Sociology, South Asian University

### CONCEPT NOTE

The category of performance has an inherent looseness, anchoring a search on the webpages to a wanton mix of destinations: research papers related to economic performance, psychological performance, political performance and counseling on sexual performance. In the midst of the manifest polyphony of the term there exists systematic disciplinary usages giving rise to sophisticated debates. These are various disciplinary approaches, such as anthropology of performance, performance studies overlapping with cultural studies, literary studies, theater studies, etc., social psychology of performance, and so on so forth. The multidisciplinary approach leads to comprehend contemporary instances of performance, along with its cognate such as performative and performativity popular in the performance studies. It is no longer performance restricted to a predetermined script and executed within the confines of Proscenium Theater alone. The instances of performances are located in variety of social spheres- in the conventional market place where a local seller employs performative tools to capture the attention of the passers-by or in a shopping mall where the visuals, signs, and surroundings have performative bearings to allure the visitors. Performances are also explicitly present in the speeches of political leadership, the canvassing for elections, and swearing-in ceremonies. We encounter them in the works of art and aesthetics as well as in the artifices of the megapolis. Needless to say, performance characterizes ordinary and extraordinary domains of the social. In this wake it is imperative to explore the socio-cultural landscape of India, pinpointing the communicative impacts, of the instances of performance. It is primarily to comprehend the politics of communication and culture accomplished through the acts of performances.

The traditional and recent approaches to performance in various disciplines have yielded manifold understandings. They unfold the instances of performances, traditional as well as modern. Anthropological tradition subsumes a vast corpus of studies on ritual performances. They aid in understanding the folk worldview, primitive art and craft, and underpinning mythological structure.

On the other hand, in the disciplinary domain of performance studies, the scholars have insisted on the necessity to read politics in the instances of performance. This is politics at the level of nation, revealing the national subjectivities in a historical epoch. Furthermore, this also leads to understand politics at the scale of global, in terms of the misappropriation of the local for reinventing the exotica for the urban consumptions. The performance studies, in consonance with culture studies, also offers a sense of emancipatory politics through performances in modern India. But then, there have been a generic allegation that performance studies do not look into the social structural underpinnings of performances. The totality of socio-cultural context, a hobbyhorse of the social anthropologists, is not adequately understood in the performance studies.

And it leaves us fumbling about a possible holism of perspective on the myriad instances of performance and performativity in the contemporary South Asia. The proposed two day international seminar would address the following research questions:

1. How to make sense of our everyday life governed by a veritable 'microphysics of performance'?
2. What are the key signs and symbols employed in the contemporary performances of political implications?
3. What are the language, myth and structure of the performances?
4. What notions of performances govern us our institutions of public significance in the society of spectacles?
5. What sense of collective subjectivity emanate from various instances of performance in contemporary South Asia?
6. Do the instances of performance reveal a dynamics of tradition and modernity, or local and global, or translocal cultural circulations?
7. How much of the hybridity thesis holds true for the instances of performance in contemporary India?
8. Could there be a regional framework of performance connecting India with various other parts of South Asia? Amidst posterity and contemporaneity about the notions of performance there emerges an imperative to further the quest for an interdisciplinary understanding of the performance driven social, cultural and political lives in contemporary India.

#### Moot Objectives

- Understanding the politics of communication and culture in contemporary south Asia
- Understanding the performativity in various institutions, political, cultural, economic, in contemporary India
- Understanding languages, signs, symbols reflective of modern mythologies underpinning the instances of performances in contemporary India
- Engendering a theoretical framework conducive to understand the performative landscape of the region of South Asia
- Engendering an interdisciplinary understanding of the phenomenon of performance in contemporary India
- Engendering a questions and rationale for researches in social science researches in future