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Call for Papers

Constructing Marginalities, Constituting Power: Intersections of Caste-Gender in Contemporary India



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- 1 The past decade has seen a steady increase in the number of caste atrocities in India, many of which involve women. Whereas explorations of structural hierarchies usually prioritize single dimensions of power relations, it is quite obvious that caste in India does not stand as an isolated category of identity. Like other social stratifications it is a product of oppression based on multiple axes of identities that shape the specific conditions of existence and belonging. Group essentialism focusing on 'primary contradictions' (Menon, 2009:110), privileges certain stereotypical characters of a group as standardized, thus marginalizing those who do not fall within this set category. Intersectionality provides a useful explanatory tool in exploring simultaneously held identities and how they shape group affiliations and access to power.
- 2 Intersectionality has been usefully applied by feminists across the world to demonstrate how multiple marginalizations at individual and institutional levels create forms of social, political, economic, historical and other exclusions which cannot be understood as a sum of individual parts but need to be recognized through their very intersection be it race, gender, caste, religion, sexuality and the like (e.g. Bowleg, 2008; Brah and Phoenix, 2004). Social positions are relational and it is the contradiction and collaboration between these that shape everyday social life. In India while the use of intersectionality in academic research is relatively uncharted, Dalit feminists (e.g. Rege, 2005) have argued time and again of the crucial need to re-examine entangled histories of women as being marked and embodied in their caste identities.
- 3 This special issue proposes to foreground intersectionality as an approach to empirical research that indexes the interaction of multiple categories of difference. The recent Menon-John debate (2015) on the applicability of intersectionality in the context of India, illustrates that both the theoretical and methodological application of the concept is not unproblematic. Following on from this debate, the special issue will address itself to the

task of examining the complex relationship that exists between multiple systems of exploitation, which endure by interacting with one another to mutually reinforce their legitimacy. Through empirical work using intersectional mode of analysis, it will illustrate how intersectionality is a critical concept in a multi-layered society like India not just to understand multiple subjectivities but also how power and dominance are constituted.

- 4 The processes of caste domination and marginalization rest on the interplay of gender identities among other categories. Both caste and gender identities are based on culturally accepted and valued notions regarding bodies, pure or polluting, dominant and/or dangerous. This special issue aims to address the specific question of how caste and gender identities co-construct each other in crucial aspects of lived experiences. How are power and dominance constructed through intersectional identities? Locating the formation of subjectivities within everyday processes enables an examination of the multiple ways in which differences between identity categories are organized and ordered. The task of this special issue will be to unearth these discursive processes that are involved in the construction of subjectivities within the framework of identities.
- 5 We invite papers that use intersectionality as an approach to empirical research. The intersectional analytical framework should examine how caste and gender identities not only shape different contexts of one's lived experiences but are actually shaped and contextualized by each other. This special issue of *SAMAJ* seeks submissions reflecting multifaceted approaches to the question of caste-gender intersectionalities. We strongly invite submissions which are based on primary empirical work. Submissions are invited on caste-gender intersections including but not limited to
 - intersections of caste-gender on issues of work and livelihood;
 - caste-gender narratives of violence;
 - social relations through intersections of caste-gender;
 - caste-gender intersections shaping identity politics;
 - embodied culture through intersections of caste-gender.
- 6 The completed papers must be submitted by September 15, 2017 for the review process to the editors of the special issue: Supurna Banerjee and Nandini Ghosh (banerjee.supurna@gmail.com). They should be 6000-8000 words (including footnotes and endnotes but excluding bibliography and abstracts). The papers should follow the *American Sociological Association Style Guide* (4th edition, 2010) and be written in American English. More details on manuscript formatting at <http://samaj.eu/157>. Interested authors are encouraged to send a message expressing their interest (along with a provisional title and short abstract) to the editors of this special issue as soon as possible.

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