



**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University**

Young Scholars' Conference – 20-22 October 2016

**YOUTH GEOGRAPHIES IN/OF
CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA**

Call for Papers

Particularly in the West, there have been numerous studies of youth 'cultures' and 'sub cultures', and the lives of youth as refracted by class and ethnicity, space and place, gender and sexuality, media, the politics of multiculturalism, artistic production and forms of consumption. By contrast, youth has not historically been a central category in South Asian sociology. However firstly, recent demographic changes have forced South Asian scholars to rethink youth as a category. According to statistical reports, across South Asia¹, youth (defined as those below 25) form at least 40 percent of the total population of any South Asian country, with the numbers ranging from 40 % at the lowest in Sri Lanka to almost 65% in Afghanistan at the highest (Wadley 2015: 14-15). Secondly, and more critically, as authors like Mark Leichy (1995) write, the younger generation appears to be coming to age in often completely new socio-economic and political circumstances, from the generation before. In this context, an emergent literature suggests that the youth are critical to any understanding of the future trajectory of South Asian nations, particularly in relation to 1) education, work and employment, 2) mass consumption, media and new technologized networks, 3) politics and social movements, as well as 4) gender and sexuality, in terms of new gender conventions and subventions, as well as new forms of sexual engagements.

Youth as understood here, is not a fixed category defined by age, but in many ways is the "beginning of a long-term, even lifelong, engagement in particular cultural practices" (Bucholtz 2002: 526). Youth should be treated as social and political actors in their own right. Thus, youth geographies, as we understand them, can be understood as sites of transition, engagement and re-creation of existing, and emergent, structural socio-

¹ South Asia here denotes India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Bhutan.

economic, political and cultural conditions.

Based on this premise, and as part of their annual intellectual calendar, the graduate students of the Department of Sociology at South Asian University present the annual Young Scholars Conference on the specific theme 'Youth Geographies in/of Contemporary South Asia', which is open to other graduate students, young researchers and teachers. We invite **empirically grounded papers** which critically reflect on youth cultures and geographies in South Asia through any of the following foci:

- Geographies of work, working conditions, and aspirations of, and for, work
- Consumption, self-improvement, consuming-fashioning, friendships and community
- Social movements, politics, leadership, new practices of solidarity, activism and networking
- The use of social media, knowledge flows, circulation and citation
- Nationalism, internationalism, trans-nationalism, and new forms of politics
- Relevant histories: how we imagine who we are, and where we are going
- Growing up with war, war-like conditions, conflict and civil war, the politics of reconstruction
- Gendered and queer lives, new forms of family, mobility and new anxieties-hostilities, new forms of sexuality and sexual engagement, gendered and queer politics and social movements
- Hope, disappointment, time-pass, alterity: imagining new futures
- Popular culture, film, music and television, youth and creative expression
- Education and student life
- Migration
- Youth and authority, inter-generational conflict, youth and the state

The conference focus here is on understanding structural conditions, representations, experiences and meaning, as well as the practices of youth individuals and communities themselves, including within new political economies of work, education, and employment, mediatized, technologized, lifestyle and consumptive dispensations, as well as political and social movements. We are interested in considering new forms of engagement, self-fashioning, experimentation, negotiation and sociality, in relation to the above, including the emerging contours of young gendered and sexual lives and conduct, while welcoming papers on other relevant topics. We believe that youth, and young scholars by extension are uniquely positioned to conduct research with youth communities, perhaps with better access than that available to older, and more experienced scholars. In this sense, the Young Scholars Conference, particularly on this theme aims at incubating vital scholarship in the South Asian context.

Eligibility

Papers are invited from candidates in MA and MPhil/PhD programs in the arts, social sciences and humanities at recognized universities and research organizations in South Asia. We also welcome contributions from individuals who are currently not enrolled in any

university provided no more than one year has passed since their graduation from at least an MA programme.

Submission of Guidelines

Initially, by **July 1 2016**, an abstract of no more than 500 words has to be forwarded by email as an attachment to: The Coordinator, Young Scholars' Conference, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University, Akbar Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021, India. Email address: **scholars-conf@soc.sau.ac.in**

Authors of selected abstracts will be informed by email by **August 1 2016**, and complete papers have to be submitted for plagiarism review by **October 1 2016**.

As part of the programme, we will have one screening session and one panel devoted to digital media forms produced by young practitioners themselves. Applicants interested in submitting their media forms (short films, video installations, podcasts, photography, websites/blogs etc.) should include a sample of their work, along with a written abstract, by the above deadlines.

Submission Format

- Abstract: 500 words; font should be Calibri point 11; 1.5 line spacing; no references and no footnotes;
- Papers: no more than 7,000 words including footnotes and references; font should be Calibri point 11; 1.5 line spacing. For referencing and style guidelines please visit: <http://www.sau.ac.in/pdf/SAU-SOC-JournalStyleGuide.pdf>
- Abstracts and papers must be submitted as MS Word documents via email;
- The name of the file should be **YourName_InstitutionAffiliation_Department Affiliation**;
- The subject of the email should be: **SOC-FSS-SAU-Young Scholars and Researchers Conference 2016**.
- For those interested in submitting media-based work, along with abstract, please send a synopsis of the work, along with a media sample and/or 5 minute trailer.
- All abstracts/synopsis and samples should be sent to the Coordinator – Young Scholars' Conference: **scholars-conf@soc.sau.ac.in**

Inquiries

All inquiries should be addressed to the Coordinator – Young Scholars' Conference: **scholars-conf@soc.sau.ac.in**

Funding

A few travel grants may be available for participants travelling from outside Delhi and India