Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

CALL FOR PAPERS

Life in the Indian City: Aspirations, Expressions and Planning  
A one day graduate students' conference  
18 April 2015

According to the 2011 Census just over one third of India now resides in its cities and towns. The proportion of urban population in India is expected to grow to forty percent in the next twenty years. This rapid growth in the concentration of population in urban spaces calls for rethinking the way our cities and town are imagined, planned and governed. Moreover, the urban population today exerts an influence over the country's politics, culture and economics, that is disproportionate to its strength. Recent trends in administrative alterations in processes of urbanisation - as in the recent amendments to the land acquisition laws and environmental clearances - are heavily weighted in favour of prioritising the growth of Indian cities. The growth of social media and an almost total focus on the urban imagination in other forms of dominant media relegates the rural constituency further to the margins. The resulting imbalance threatens to give form/rise to resistance and unrest. A corresponding softening of democracy and an undermining of democratic institutions have led to a rise in the politics of identity. The city in India has also shaped particular literary genres and urban sub-cultures instrumental in giving voice to urban segments which are otherwise unrepresented in the dominant cultural sphere. The Indian urban space, therefore, finds itself at the cusp of rising aspirations and increased challenges for governance. This seminar proposes to take stock of life as lived in Indian urban spaces, and to examine its histories and future through the eyes of the scholars of tomorrow.

Research papers may address the following themes:

Migration, Urbanization, Inequality, Growth, Health, Climate change, Political economy and any related topics in Development Economics, Urban informal sector, urban livelihoods


The construction of urban identities, movements from the rural to the urban, representation of urban spaces in literature, the idea of the urban as modern, the cityscape in literature, coming of age - representing Indian cities through Indian writings, the graphic novel, urban sub-cultures.

Polis and Philosophical thinking, City (polis) and Tragedy, Urban alienation, Walter Benjamin and City, Saint Augustine and the City of God: (Virtue, God and the City), City: Utopia,
Dystopia, Heterotopia, Henri Lefebvre ‘Philosophy of the City and Planning Ideology’, Georg Simmel ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, City, Citizenship and Political Thought, Cosmopolitanism vs Provincialism, City as BwO (bodies without organs), Dwelling, Community and commons. Camp, Ghetto, Slum as Biopolitical paradigm

Cities and Climate change, Cities and sustainable development, Technoscience and the city

Positive health and well-being, emotion, cognition and culture, inter group relations and identity.

Globalization, migration, cinema and the city, the sacred city, conflict and change, ecology and environment, imagining urban space, violence and resettlement, the city as site of social protest/social movements, class and ethnicity in the city

Urban aesthetics, Network cities

Papers may also be submitted on other relevant issues around the theme of “Life in the Indian City: Aspirations, Expressions and Planning”. The call for papers is open for all graduate students engaged in masters or doctoral studies in any discipline of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Architecture, Planning or Engineering.

Submissions are invited for the conference from students pursuing studies towards a Masters degree or Research Scholars working on a Doctoral Research. Students who complete their Masters in 2012 or later may also submit abstracts. Abstracts for papers of not more than 300 words should be submitted to gradconf{AT}hss.iitd.ac.in by 15 March 2015. In the submission the student must clearly mention her/his name, department/ centre/ institution, roll number/ registration number and year of admission into the current programme. Selected papers would be notified by 21 March 2015. Participants would be required to submit final papers of 2500-3000 words by 10 April 2015. The expected length of presentations would be 15 minutes. No TA/ DA will be paid to participants.

Best papers in various categories will be awarded.