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Caste, Craft and Education in India and Sri Lanka

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Women and Weaving in Ladakh: Missionary Interventions and the Making of a Craft Tradition

Monisha Ahmed

Abstract: The Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai, is organizing an ICSSR sponsored, **Two-Weeks Capacity Building Programme (CBP) on Data-Base on Indian Economy for Assistant Professors in Economics** at MIDS during 15th -27th April, 2019. The main aim of the programme is to expose the faculty at assistant professor level, preferably those who are engaged in applied research, to India's social-economic database systems, in terms of their definition, measurement, methodology, sources, characteristics and limitations. The main focus of the CBP will be on macroeconomic and social sector data system at national and state level, and at sectoral level. The

pedagogy of the program will consist of class lectures, discussions, hands-on exercise by the domain experts and resource persons.

Keywords: Ladakh; Moravian missionaries; gendered weaving practices; textile crafts

From Needle to Letters: Zenana Mission's Encounters with Mappila Muslims of Malabar

Muhammed Aslam E.S.

ABSTRACT: This article examines the activities of women missionaries of the Basel German Evangelical Mission through literacy and needlework and the response of native women with special reference to Mappila Muslim women in colonial Malabar (present-day north Kerala). The article covers the question of literacy, craft, gender and religion by looking at historical and ethnographic accounts. It traces the role of the Mission in gendering skill and labour through missionary pedagogy. Critically analysing the missionary image of 'Zenana' that makes the binary of liberated western women and imprisoned native women, the article addresses the negotiations of native women with missionary modernity.

Keywords: Basel Mission; literacy; needlework; Bible-women; Mappila; Malabar

Riotous Needlework: Gendered Pedagogy and a Negotiated Christian Aesthetic in the American Ceylon Mission

Mark E. Balmforth

ABSTRACT: Not unlike many parts of South Asia, foot-pedal-powered Singer sewing machines are ubiquitous in Sri Lanka's Jaffna Peninsula, as much an inheritance of missionary and colonial domestic education as an implication of the island's recent war. The social history of sewing and other needle arts extends deep into the Peninsula's early modern history, at least as far back as the Portuguese period. At the centre of this article sit a circle of young Tamil embroidering women who, in the mid-1840s, helped transform what it meant to be a modern Jaffna Tamil woman. This article reads the samplers of this set, the Oodooville Group, as source material into the pedagogical and devotional worlds in which they lived. The article argues that the works, each characterised by a riot of colour, constitute an experiment in mission pedagogy revealing an encounter and momentary negotiation of both aesthetics and devotion between missionaries and the students they sought to convert.

Keywords: Christian mission; Tamil; Sri Lanka; women's embroidery

Artisans and Technical Education in Lucknow, United Provinces: c. 1880–1940

Bidisha Dhar

ABSTRACT: This article attempts to argue that the trail of emphasis on technical skill education as part of the larger education system can be traced to the 19th century. An important element of this programme was the attempt to connect the structure of the classroom-based formal education system to industrial production in a country. Along with that, the attempt was also to create a disciplined labouring class. Interestingly, as this article explores, the experiments that had begun in the British metropole and consequently were imported to India as per the requirements of the colonial context were not completely successful. In India, the identity of caste played an important role. But in many ways the

design of the education system had the caste and class divide embedded within it. This article attempts to explore the ways in which this was done.

Keywords: Artisans; technical education; skill training; colonial education; industrialisation

The Search for ‘Tanner’s Blood’: Caste and Technical Education in Colonial Uttar Pradesh

Shivani Kapoor

ABSTRACT: The conversion of traditional crafts into modern technological industries was one of the important interventions made by the colonial regime in India, in collaboration with the native class and caste elite, in order to provide a boost to industrial development in the colony. This transformation was sought to be achieved through sustained investments in the regime of technical and vocational education. Leather, with its strategic importance for export-led trade and warfare, was an important commodity for this proposed modern industrial regime. However, due to the inextricable relationship of leatherwork with caste, the colonial administration had to negotiate through complex issues of sensorial and bodily politics in attempting to create a modern industry out of a ‘disgusting’ and ‘smelly’ manual craft. Examining archival records and relying on contemporary field research, this article examines the politics and processes through which a sanitised realm of leatherwork was sought to be created through a regime of technical education in colonial Uttar Pradesh in the early decades of the 20th century. In delineating the contours of these tense caste and sensorial relationships, this article also reflects on the eventual failure of this enterprise and consequences of this for understanding the relationship between caste, work and education in the present.

Keywords: Caste; technical education; leatherwork; Uttar Pradesh; industry

Politics of Ignoring: Stories of Asari Interventions in Colonial Practices in Malabar

Sunandan K.N.

ABSTRACT: This article explores Asari (carpenter caste in Keralam) interventions in colonial appropriations of artisanal practices in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Mapping these interventions through the category of ‘politics of ignoring’, this article argues that the strategies of Asaris were unique and very much related to their practice of asarippani (carpentry). According to their self-understandings, asarippani was a located practice (not necessarily local), bounded in specific notions of space and time. Through an analysis of Asari practices this article argues that artisanal practice is neither just a bodily activity nor an abstracted thinking. It is an activity in which body thinks and mind acts.

Keywords: Asaris of Malabar; artisanal knowledge practices; colonial knowledge; caste; educational reform

Technical Education in the Imagination of the Ceylonese Developmental State: D. J. Wimalasurendra and the Navandanna Caste

Bandura Dileepa Witharana

ABSTRACT: A study of the life of D. J. Wimalasurendra, the prominent Ceylonese engineer from the Navandanna artisan caste who was the main figure behind the first-ever mass-scale hydroelectric project, shows that decades before independence a widespread campaign for a Ceylonese developmental state was present.¹ This article investigates the role of technical education in the imagination of the Ceylonese developmental state – imagination that emerged during an era (from 1850 to 1950) within which the nature of technical education in the island underwent transformation from caste-based education to modern engineering. The article further explores why the imagination of an industrially advanced Sri Lanka that was made possible because of the excess power to be generated by the hydroelectric project failed to evolve into a mass movement of developmental nationalism leading to the Ceylonese/Sri Lankan developmental state and whether the caste affiliation of Wimalasurendra had anything to do with this.

Keywords: Wimalasurendra; developmental state; Navandanna caste; technical education; Aberdeen-Laxapana hydroelectric scheme