

Call for Chapters for an Edited Volume titled

Nationhood and the Indian Subcontinent: Contemporary Cultural Reflections

**The Department of English, NSOU
takes the initiative of publishing a book titled
Nationhood and the Indian Subcontinent: Contemporary Cultural Reflections
in collaboration with
Centre for Language Translation and Cultural Studies (CLTCS)
Netaji Subhas Open University
Kolkata, India**

Concept Note:

In terms of nationhood, the idea of the Indian subcontinent lies between the brackets of shared geospatial and cultural identities; its locus being traceable at the interstices of the postcolonial and the global. The proposed volume posits an intercultural understanding of the Subcontinent on parameters that hold multiple sociological and cultural implications for post-national societies in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan which once constituted British India. The perception of India as playing a hegemonic role in the politics of the region often evokes complicated/ problematic relationships between these subcontinental nations that impacts relationships across borders.

The several partitions that have definitively altered geopolitics of the Subcontinent are *sui generis* the largest historical events of South Asia in the 20th century. Despite the vast body of work across media on the Indian partition of 1947 and the Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, their inordinately “long” nature pervades the destinies of nation states even today. Beyond the clutter of high politics and international diplomacy, it is mind-boggling to see how ‘internal’ developments within geographical borders of any one of these countries create ripples in others. This makes the situation in the subcontinent clearly different from partitions witnessed elsewhere in the world; substantially affecting the aspirations and agonies of nationhood that underlie continuing citizen histories. More than ever before, these questions have emerged in the present time, marked as it is by much debate following legislations on citizenship in India, peasant movements, recurrent tensions on the borders, the renewed surge of fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh and India, legislations on Kashmir, and above all the successive waves of the pandemic. As scholars of Humanities, we feel that the time is rife to deliberate at length on present issues concerning our nation states and their subjects that find abundant expression in various **contemporary cultural reflections**. The proposed volume intends to bring together scholars across the Subcontinent who are willing to approach the context of nationhood from the broad purview of Cultural Studies.

By adopting the broadly discursive frame of Cultural Studies at a time of manifold crises of existence that challenge citizen lives in overt and covert ways, the volume shall probe into the complicated nature of negotiations between the state and its subjects from multiple points of perception, that are manifest in cultural semiotics. This perception of discursiveness with the Eurocentric frame of nation(alism) in the South Asian context is not new. Its first succinct expression was in Tagore's 'Nationalism in India' (1917), where he decried the Western ideal for deflecting attention from the root of the challenge that is social, not political; adding that in approaching the condition of the social, our solution to the world will be a sterling contribution to humanity. Our collective failure at comprehending the ideal and basking in a skewed notion of the *vishwaguru* is sadly oracular in its negativity. In *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (2006) Arjun Appadurai perceives it as a compulsive journey 'From Ethnocide to Ideocide'. Between Tagore and Appadurai therefore lie the paradoxes of nationhood, manifest yet again in the recent turns that Subcontinental history has been witness to.

As an Open University, our practice of dismantling elitist utopias as befits liberal humanistic studies, and our stated mission of democratised education as the only sustainable means of empowerment underlie the philosophical conception of this volume. The collection shall envisage to initiate meaningful dialogue on a wide range of citizenship issues in a spirit of empathic understanding of the commonalities that reinforce the interstitial nature of our citizen identities. The discursive spirit embedded in faithful forms of cultural representation is in our understanding an authentic channel of the essentially polyphonic nature of lived realities, unified as they are within diversities of the assimilative understanding of nationhood as inclusive humanity. Both the right to disagree and the nature of dissent will therefore figure in cultural reflections across genres that this volume aims to bring between its covers.

Suggested subthemes for Chapters:

- Nation and state in culturalist perception
- Contestations of nationhood in contemporary literature, film and other performing arts
- Dissent in culturalist performativity
- Subcontinental assemblages in culturalist forms: beyond national identities
- Civil or political societies: cultural dynamics in new narratives of nationalism(s)
- Polarised media or national interests: the dialectic of nations
- Are distances social or physical: new psychologies of Othering
- Environmentalism, activism and the state
- Cultural expressions across new media
- The search for pluralism
- Citizenship and statelessness in cultural representations
- Rise of the civil society
- Migration and refugee literature

➤ Dissent in popular literature and mass media

Abstracts are invited in **not more than 200** words along with a maximum of **5 keywords** from contributors. Abstracts with title are to be written in **MS Word** format only, with **1.5 line spacing** and in **12 font size**, and sent **as attachments by email to deptofenglishnsou@gmail.com by 31st January 2022**. Contributors are advised not to include their names or any personal information in the attachment, as the abstracts will be blind peer reviewed. Names, official affiliations, email address and mobile numbers are to be mentioned in a separate sheet. Abstract acceptance will be communicated by **7th February 2022**, and full length papers (5000 – 6000 words) will have to be submitted on the same Email ID **by 10th March 2022**. Details of stylesheet to be followed will be provided in the notification of Abstract acceptance. Full papers will similarly be subjected to plagiarism check and peer review. There are no publication charges involved.

Editors:

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