



Call for Papers

Department of Culture and History of India and Tibet, University of Hamburg is organizing the international conference

Democratizing Governance in India: a facet of aspirational polity.

The conference will take place on 2 and 3 November 2018 at the University of Hamburg. Please find below the concept note and four themes to be addressed in the sessions.

Scholars are invited to submit their paper proposals including a) title, b) name of the author, and c) an abstract of up to 250 words until 25 July 2018 by email to Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty <bidyut.chakrabarty@uni-hamburg.de> and a copy (Cc) to <tatiana.oranskaia@uni-hamburg.de>

Young scholars are especially encouraged to participate.

There is no participation fee for the conference.

The organizers are looking forward to your contributions.

Concept note

The 1950 republican constitution was an outcome of fierce debates in the Constituent Assembly that lasted little less than three years (between 1946 and 1949). Ideas like democracy, secularism or constitutionalism were hardly interrogated presumably because of an intellectual consensus in favour of the age-old Western discourses in which the roots of these ideas were located. There were, in other words, considered, given and thus became axiomatic in conceptualizing India as a compact of compacts. By directing attention to the changing texture of democracy since the inauguration of the 1950 Constitution of India, the proposed conference seeks to grasp the processes contributing to the way in which it is being re-conceptualized.

The discussion will focus on the period starting with the late 1990s, when a change in conceptualizing India as a Nation became clearly visible in the new cultural-ideological environment. These processes were accompanied by the articulation of a nationalist language following the construction of an Indian identity around the millennium cultural ethos and values. They challenged and undermined the dominating politico-ideological priorities, without, of course, breaking away from the foundational ethical values which sustained India as a vibrant society and polity. At the same time, the millennium cultural ethos and values flowed in the life-blood of the country impacting the evolving of a new national conceptual universe with its nationalist language.

The aim of this conference is to comprehend the unfolding of the processes of democratization holistically, with the view to eventually conceptualize the India of the 21st century and identify an aspirational vision to its polity.

There are four themes which are chosen to address the concern:

- a) How to comprehend the salience of the 1950 Constitution and increasing importance of constitutionalism as critical to India's democratic governance?
- b) How to grasp the democratization of governance since the 1990s in an era of globalization;
- c) How to grasp the growing salience of caste and ethnicity in India's democratic governance, especially following the adoption of the Mandal reservation scheme in 1990?
- d) How to define, in terms of democratization, the ascending prominence of the new vocabulary of politics around nation, nationalism and national identity?

The conference will thus set the ball rolling in a direction which will help us redesign our conceptual universe for an appropriate conceptualization of India as a democratic polity.

The conference is supported by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) as part of the program *Promotion of foreign guest lecturers to teach at German universities*.