

Interdisciplinary National Conference
Borders and Spaces: Re-calibrating Indian Diaspora in the 21st Century
Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur
(In-collaboration with ICSSR, New Delhi)
6- 7 December 2019
Concept Note

In the 21st century, a special form of literature on Border Studies has emerged, informed by various disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities. Central to this endeavor are multiple interpretations of visible and invisible border functions, as well as border-related power relations in society concerning “border perception and interpretation processes”.

In the age of globalization, the concepts of borders and spaces have taken on new significances. Globalization implies economic and cultural de-territorialization and the consequent issue of the intensification of social relations. However, globalization paradoxically generates renewed interest in borders and an anxious desire to stabilize definitions of spaces, as exemplified by the thousand kilometers of border walls built in the world since the turn of the century. Discourses on borders are fraught with political implications, as borders circumscribe particular spaces, making them concrete, and contributing to a sense that their identities can be delimited, delineated and differentiated from those of other spaces. Borders imply power relations, control, and sovereignty and therefore participate in processes of stabilization of space, population, and imagined identities.

Setting borders does not only lead to the fencing of the territories, but it also means organizing spaces through regulations, codes, and norms, highlighting the extent to which delineated spaces are social and cultural constructs that shape the way identities are conceived and understood. Borders, also embody the problematic aspect of space division, as they also connect spaces, being points where the known and the other, the recognized-as-familiar

and the conceived-as-alien, intersect. Borders are ever permeable, though in various degrees. As a consequence, spaces can be defined not as fixed entities, but as living organisms that are constantly being redefined through discourses, political agenda, media representations, literature, and art.

One realizes that ‘If all the world is a stage’, then borders are its *mise en scène*, its ordering of space and action, wherein actors and observers must work at making borders intelligible and manageable and must do so for the drama to proceed. We all are aware of the fact that ever since the advent of the term ‘globalization’ in the early 1990s, the movement of people across international boundaries gave rise to new concepts that forced new trends and paradigms into social sciences and humanities research. Since globalization is now deemed as the major ideological force that is reshaping international relationships, community relations and the individual’s place in them, a plethora of ‘new’ keywords have emerged. Concepts such as ‘transnational families’, ‘knowledge workers’, ‘renegotiation of identities’, ‘hybridity of cultural identities’, ‘Balkanization’ of states, among a range of others, accompanied globalization not only as concepts but as a complementary arsenal to support its value as an ideological tool of twenty-first-century capitalism. However, borders are not just ‘visible lines’ in space or on a map; on the contrary, they are complex social constructs, with many different meanings and functions.

The proposed conference will consider borders as comprising four overlapping sets of different types of boundaries: geopolitical, socio-cultural, economic and biophysical. As people integrate into new host societies and renegotiate their identities in foreign environments, cultural relativism and acculturation have reemerged as analytical tools to understand recent processes of increasing flows of people across international boundaries. While people’s transnational movements are creating ever more complex relationships, they continue to regroup and converge towards others who share similar geographical, physical and religious characteristics.

In this sense, it calls for more research and for newer conceptualizations on how migrant groups relocate, integrate and renegotiate their identities in new host environments. It is perhaps more important now than ever before concerning the Indian Ocean and its conjunction with other waterways such as the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, Southern Ocean, Tasman Sea, South China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean.

We welcome papers for the conference that will feature interdisciplinary scholarship on race, space, power, climate change, and Diaspora in the wake of decolonization movements into and beyond the 21st century around the theme of *Re-calibrating Diasporas* in the broadest possible sense.

Themes and sub-themes may address, but are not limited to:

- Recalibrating migration, diaspora, postcolonial studies
- Conserving Regional literature & Cultural Diversity
- Climate Change and its effect on diaspora
- Geo-politics and Indian Diaspora Community
- Indian Diaspora in postcolonial theory and practice
- Identity studies dealing with race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and nationality
- Recent trends of xenophobia, racism, Orientalism, and exclusion
- Indenture from India and South Asia in diaspora studies
- Indian Diasporic religions and rituals, and belief systems
- Digital, Medical and Ecological humanities, including environmental literature, history, and philosophy
- New historiographies of migration and citizenship
- Re-calibrating area studies and field formations

Important Dates

Submission of Paper Abstracts & Registration forms: **25 November 2019**

Submission of Abstracts on

Conf.bordersandspaces@gmail.com

Acceptance Letter from Organizers: **30 November 2019**

REGISTRATION FORM

**Interdisciplinary National Conference
Borders and Spaces: Re-calibrating Indian Diaspora in the 21st
Century
Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur
6- 7 December 2019**

Name:

Designation:

Institutional Affiliation:

Telephone no:

E-mail id:

Residence:

Mode of Travel:

Date of Arrival

Date of Departure

Request for Accommodation:

Any Other Information:

Date:

Signature

Registration Fee:

- **Outstation Delegates (with accommodation):** INR 2000
- **Local Delegates (without accommodation):** INR 1000
- **For students (without accommodation):** INR 800

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Udaipur

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