

## **RC: Ad-hoc group 1: Sociology of Everyday Life**

### **ABSTRACTS**

**NOTE: ALL THOSE WHO HAVE NOT PAID ISS MEMBERSHIP, RC MEMBERSHIP SHOULD SO IMMEDIATELY (Last Date 20 December 2016)**

#### **Why I am not Communal?**

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We grow up with a rich treasure of lived experiences, draw up ideas and perceptions about the life and the world around out of them, get into a dialogue with the traditions and macro societal and historical forces and decide about our societal role or individual course of action. This is at the same time a process of drawing identity; “communal” or “secular” in the present context. Against the backdrop of historical developments in the first half of twentieth century and growing up in the post-colonial yet communalized socio-political ambience in East Pakistan while surviving two communal attacks I, along with many others of my time, have seen from the close dimensions of human responses which have made me “secular” and not “communal”. Passing through similar experiences I have seen many of my friends have turned “communal”. In this paper I would identify the forces that made me secular, not in Gandhian sense but in “atheist” sense. Such a perception of life constitutes a part of “practical consciousness” that largely determines my approach to the members of other religious faiths in my everyday life.

#### **Importance of Family Relations in the Everyday Life of the Urban Middleclass Aged**

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While the importance of “marriage” as a social institution is on the decline, particularly in the US and Europe, the importance of family and family relations seems to be on the rise across the globe. In the urban middleclass context, like metropolitan Kolkata, the family and family relations bear immense significance in the life of the aged. My study of the middleclass senior citizens, those who live with their household members and those

who live in old-age homes in Kolkata, brings to light that the factors like (1) downsizing of the family, primarily because of fertility control and acceptance of one-child norm, (2) the decision, primarily of the women, to remain unmarried, (3) large-scale job and marriage-related dispersal of the members of the younger generation, (4) major ailments, and (5) death of the spouse or a child leave a destabilizing impact on the family care system and on the life of the elderly. The household composition and relations among its members largely decide the kind of life the elderly would have. As an adaptive response to these ubiquitous changes the elderly (1) take shelter in old-age homes, (2) make their married daughters live close by, (3) consolidate conjugal relations, kinship and neighbourhood relations, (4) depend more on professional service providers, and (5) make good use of modern communication technology to keep in touch with their dispersed children.

## **NATURE AND PERCEPTION OF AGEING AMONG THE RURAL AGED WOMEN: A STUDY OF DIBRUGARH DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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### **Abstract**

The study aims to explore nature and perception of ageing among the selected rural aged women. A total of 40 aged women whose age 60 years and above were recruited as participants by employing purposive sampling method. For the analysis of data the researcher used 'descriptive' analysis process. Participants were interviewed in accordance with their lived experiences and were analysed through thematic analysis. The themes emerged from analysis of raw data are as follows: 'increase in chronological age', 'reduce physical capabilities', 'reduce mental capabilities', 'getting daughter-in-law for the first son', 'birth of a grandchild', 'peace of mind', 'free from all kinds of responsibilities', 'lacking roles', 'lost in memories', 'physical immobility and confinement', 'increased religious activities', 'retirement from job/work', 'stopping of menstrual cycle', 'loneliness', 'helplessness', 'fear of impending death'. Its main objectives is to provide insights into the meaning of ageing and old age for aged women themselves, and describing ageing perceptions and experiences among the rural aged women; and to provide how socio-economic position influence ageing experiences and the formation of ageing perceptions.

***Keywords:* Ageing; Rural Women; Nature; Perception.**

# AN INSIGHT INTO THE EVERYDAY WORKING LIFE OF KARIGARS OF SILIGURI: A CASE STUDY

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## *Abstract*

A woman's best friend is gold, which she adorns to add to her beauty. But do we ever wonder about the life conditions of the people/artists behind the beautiful jewellery? This paper take a detour on the life and working conditions of the karigars (gold jewellery artisans) inside the jewellery workshop in siliguri. It presents the behind the scene reality of the everyday working life of these karigars. The struggle and the turmoil of these people who work hard to meet two square meals a day. This work focuses on the daily routine of the karigar who spend their entire life in workshop making jewellery. The working environment of the jewellery workshop which, in most of the cases is unhealthy and hazardous. Basic facilities like proper ventilation and appropriate light are a luxury for these artisans. Additionally, dust and smoke inside the workshop, are their constant companion. All these factors affect their physical and mental conditions. These reasons attribute to the occupational hazards for these karigars. Due to which their family life is also affected. All the factors mentioned above shall be discussed in details in this paper.

## **SYMBOL OR DRAMA**

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## Abstract

In the world of interactions, non-verbal communications form an important carrier of symbols. Be it tattoo, piercing or a simple weight loss regime, the present generation is not afraid to express themselves in diverse ways. Northeast India has been a bank to several such art forms of the body, as an integral part of its culture and tradition. Although, their rationality has often been questioned, but its presence and influence in everyday life is undeniable.

In this context, Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy can be related. Goffman has used 'theatre' as a metaphor to explain everyday life whereby he looks at social interaction as a theatrical performance. Tattoos and piercing are such art form which the present generation uses to perform in the stage called society. It is more so the case in a world where globalisation has led to large amount of enculturation.

Thus, the classical tradition given by Goffman holds relevance in several aspects of human life even in the globalised, modernised world and this paper attempts to unveil precisely those aspects in India specifically. To question and check the validity of the dramaturgy tradition in understanding body art as seen and used by the present generation will be the focus of this research.

Key words: symbol, body transformation, dramaturgy, globalisation

## **Locating Belongingness in Everyday Life: Ethnic Identities vs Citizenship in India**

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### **Abstract**

Owing to the colonial administrative decisions of territorial divisions and population redistribution and the subsequent policies of citizenship, territorial reintegration with 'protection for aborigines' of the Indian nation-state, the questions of identity in the Indian state of Assam has been marred by violence, political protests and debates. The idea of being indigenous and ethnic have dominated the discourse on identity which has been superimposed with language, cultural traits and symbols in a competition to own rights over land and resources.

The notions of such an ethnic or indigenous have helped in creating an "other" in the form of 'illegal immigrants' and people from other parts of India. Thus, this paper explores the interactions amongst the people in the town of Hojai, in Assam to understand the larger question of what role the idea of "rootedness" to the land and "belongingness" to the nation play around their everyday lives. Based on the observation and interaction with the respondents, the author argues that the questions of identity are managed differently by people within the sphere of the market, place of residence and the imagination of the state. This ethnographic engagement

unravels the cultural milieu of the community life from a locality where identity question feeds into the decades-long conflict.

## **Journeys of the self: Everyday and the idea of ethics**

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In this paper I wish to share my thoughts on the journeys of the self as a personal narrative and as a sociological problematic. Taking two important moments from this journey, I address how the self is constructed and deconstructed in and through the different moments which mark and punctuate this journey, and transform it into a narrative. I suggest, based on personal experiences, that the question of everyday and the idea of ethics are central to the journey called life and its narrativization. If everyday is the 'context' in which the journey of the self unfolds and the narrative textualizes, then ethics points to the 'posturing of the self' in response to the tensions emanating from the encounter of the self with the unknown. When I look back, recount the life changing moments from the past, and attempt to put them down in the form of a narrative, two elements appear to me as strikingly standing out: I) the everyday socialscape within which the self encounters the unknown and ii) the ethical posturing of the self in its negotiations with the unknown. In this paper I attempt to bring out how these two elements punctuate the journeys of 'my' self, especially with regard to two life changing moments: my father's demise and my transfer from one college to another.

\*yet to receive membership number

## **Disciplinizing Everyday Life? Flagging Some Questions**

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The so-called banality of everyday life lies in it being a familiar and mundane world. However, the question that arises, is it too familiar or too mundane to be disciplinized? While reading the place of witchcraft in the Azande everyday life, one inevitably stumbles upon Evans Pritchard's anxiety: Are the Azandes capable of articulating their everyday life with such epistemic certainty as Pritchard had demonstrated? This brings us face to face with the question of how to disciplinize something that is nuanced and minutely textured into our daily living. Even when it gets disciplinized the question that still remains unaddressed is, in whose terms is the knowledge produced? In other words the problem of representation remains central to theorizing everyday life.

The paper is an attempt to raise some of the problems involved in disciplinizing everyday life.

### **Reading '*Nights of Labour*'- '*Art*', '*Life living-in-purpose*' and *Everyday***

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ABSTRACT: Everyday epistemology manifests in its microcosmic narratives. Grandeur dispositions actually escape those living and lived moments of human lives. Those moments of human history account for creative manifestations of '*agentive-survivorhood*' rather than '*grand*' labeling of victim. Jacques Ranciere's classic work '*Nights of Labour; The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France*' (1981) called for radical change in transforming the idea of art and its articulation. This paper attempts to engage with that idea of art, in its close proximity with '*life*'. Art no longer remained as almost '*puritan-leisure*' exigency of bourgeoisie, but expressive powerful language of workers. The existential search for '*life-to-be-lived*' in purpose, made their '*everyday*' beyond drudgery, humiliation and domination. Aesthetics resides not on canopy of grand architecture (larger than life) but in those pamphlets distributed after every night's celebration of life. Their articulations through art almost put challenge against stereotypical

imageries (conceptual rigid boxes of labels) for capturing working class in grand narratives because those narratives failed to capture their relentless search for '*something that went beyond wages, work-hours and the countless little grievances of the wage-earners.*' I take '*reading*' as serious method of empirical enquiry in my paper. The paper will deal with two theoretical questions in the context of reading Ranciere's work, firstly, how does art hold for '*purpose in pursuit*' to be lived and living in everyday? Secondly, how aesthetics can be located in everyday?

## **COMPREHENDING LAUGHTER AND SMILE AS EXPRESSIVE EMOTIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Laughter and smile are perhaps the most common expressions of emotion in everyday lives. Yet, in sociological literature, they remained a marginal importance until recently. Also, the said expression of emotions has been considered to be embedded in studies related to humor and happiness. Yet, what is considered in common sense reality as indicators of expression of happiness underlie masking of emotions or concealment of actual state of mind. The paper thus is an appraisal of the literature on laughter and smile to understand the subjective reality of concerned actors and the social assumptions made .

## **Smell in the Blind Everyday**

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European philosophy originating from Plato and Aristotle has arranged the senses hierarchically with sight at the top. Later after Hegel and Descartes the supremacy of sight in human life was emphasized. Aspects of reason, logic and intellect were regarded as “human” in contrast to emotion, feeling and sensory gratification which were regarded as “animalistic”. Sight was associated with intellect and hence was upheld as the human sense, while smell and some other senses were associated with emotion and therefore believed to be animalistic. Although contrasting perspectives were also present, particularly that of Locke, Hume and later very significantly Marx. Nevertheless the dominant trend was that of the supremacy of sight in the hierarchy.

Indian tradition largely emphasized multisensuality. In this context, Vyasa, Kalidasa, Vatsayana can be referred to. However later due to the impact of Western modernity and colonial rule, Indians are living a largely monosensual (sight) or bisensual (sight and sound) life. Our lived experience in everyday life largely became visual. In this background this paper would focus on those who lack this “supreme” and “human” sense of sight and would explore the role of smell in the everyday life of blind students. In their education, in identification of a person of place, in selecting or rejecting a particular food, in getting alarmed of a danger smell plays a crucial role. In the blind everyday, smell is also significant in intimacy, in constructing the image of a person, recognizing an individual and identifying his/her professional and group identity and the like.

In doing this research, in depth interviewing and analysis of literature are used as data collection techniques.

# **Interpreting Patriarchy and Violence against Women in Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple'**

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**RC- Adhoc 1: Sociology of Everyday Life**

## **Abstract**

Post Colonial literature dealing with women centric ideas is evident in most of the novels of that era. '*The Color Purple*' written in 1982 by *Alice Walker* presents the women of Africa situated in rural Georgia through certain characters. Walker has portrayed the struggle of Afro-American women through redemption and revenge. The life of Celie, the protagonist faces sexual abuse, exploitation, subjugation and violence which explain the strong hold of patriarchy in the society. Along with the issue of the subjugation of women during the post colonial period, the novel also presents racial discrimination. It also talks about the disruption of the standard sexual relationships between men and women.

The text depicts the transformation of the female characters and how about they grow eventually and change their own fortune. This paper is an attempt to understand the life of Afro-American women in the context of post colonial setting. It also focuses on understanding the problems of subjugation of women in relation to patriarchy, gender and discrimination.

**Keywords:** Post Colonial Literature, Gender, Patriarchy

ABSTRACT FOR PLENARY

## **Methodological Issues in Studying Everyday Life**

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This lecture problematises the question of method in studying everyday life. Are Sociological methods conceived in its artefacts and taught as part of the curriculum relevant in understanding everyday life? How does one teach everyday life?

### **Significance of Reflexive Method in the Study of Everyday Life**

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The methodological significance of Foucault's famous dictum 'man is both knowing subject and the object of his own study' is immense. In sociology we generally study the standard social institutions and social problems applying standard "scientific methods" with a view to produce scientific, objective knowledge but we (as conscious members of society) hardly explore the rich treasure of experiences we draw in the process of growing up, drawing knowledge and acting upon them. There is therefore an enormous scope for studying the process of growing up, the process of shaping and reshaping the elements of our dynamic "self" and identity by applying the method of self-reflection, which is essentially a process of critical engagement with both the subjective (or internalized) and objective (external, social) spheres of our everyday life. The elements of discourses thus drawn define our interaction or behaviour patterns and as we participate in the social processes we gain new body of experiences in the light of which we remodel our discourses – a process that works in an endless feed-back. I would address the problem of "autonomy" of the subject, the "value-bias", "prediction", "ideology", "conventions" and many other related critical questions that have already been raised in critiquing the method.

## **POLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

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We are generally accustomed to thinking politics in terms of large structures, state, political parties, macro-governance etc. But the fact that politics also pertains to everyday life, intimate spheres, micro-spaces has come into recent focus which has enlarged the scope of the political. The discussion will take up these issues as well as argue that the very ' sociology of everyday life' is a challenge to the hegemonic 'institutional' view of social life. In that sense, everyday sociology posits new kinds of critique of the established contours of sociology as well as the entrenched micro-powers that impoverishes our life-world.

## **DISCOURSES OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

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Considering the relative newness of *sociology of everyday life* as a specialized branch of sociology there is an urgency in (1) defining, may be roughly, the scope of this sub-discipline and (2) identifying the approaches (or methodology) to the study of everyday life. The present paper would deal with the latter, that is, identification of the methodological/conceptual frame for the study of everyday life. The primary task here is to understand the way or ways the human beings draw the philosophy/ideology/discourses or simply the consciousness of themselves and their social and cultural locale and act with reference to the collectivities that matter in their life. Looking at the sociological traditions one can make good use, in this task, of (a) the Marxist idea of praxis, (b) Gramsci's idea of commonsense ideology, (c) the idea of self and impression management in symbolic interactionism, (d) Foucault's idea of discourse, (e) Bourdieu's idea of habitus and reflexivity, and (d) Gidden's idea of structuration and practical consciousness. Reflecting on the sociological theoretical tradition we can draw an understanding of the processes of how common people draw perceptions about their life and the social world and act upon them, bringing into act their thinking, creative, critical faculty, while being driven by their perceptions of interest, knowledge (information) and value.

