

Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology, Bhilai  
in collaboration with  
Association for Literary Urban Studies

present

**Narrating the South Asian City**

Critical Perspectives

15 November 2021

Concept Note & CfP

Deep structural transformations in South Asian polity and politics over the past few decades have had far-ranging ramifications on the nature, direction, and experience of urbanisation in the subcontinent. A multi-pronged interreferencing has been insistently reshaping cities here, informed as much by their shared history of colonisation as their similar encounters with socio-economic liberalisation and bellicose, entrepreneurial nationalism.

This evolving experience of urbanity has altered not just what we say and write about South Asian cities but also how we do so. Taking contemporary South Asia as our field of study, we aim to assess urban writing across genres and forms as it engages with and deliberates on urbanity in this region. We are interested in scholarship which is able to complement its deployment of the literary with historical, sociological, architectural, and geographical perspectives, to name a few. Interested participants may consider the following as thematic guideposts:

- (Re)fashioning of gender and sexuality
- Differential footprint of planning and governance
- Negotiating violence and risk
- Impact of caste and religion
- Mediating disease and inequity
- Migration, mobility, and belonging
- Affective underpinnings of the everyday

We encourage participants to consider a broad canvas of genres, including but not limited to bildungsroman novels, noir stories, life writing, family sagas, urban comics, campus novels, policy papers, crime thrillers, judicial orders, bourgeois theatre, tour guides, and spoken poetry. Participants should employ a multi-sited approach to their discussion of their primary text(s), showing awareness of not only the interplay of form and content but

also planning and policy paradigms in and of such key sectors as governance, housing, waste, livelihood, and heritage.

**Proposals of not more than 300 words** accompanied with **bio-notes of a maximum of 100 words** should be **emailed to dept\_la@iitbhilai.ac.in** by **13 August 2021**. Selected presenters will be **informed by 6 September 2021** and **working drafts** of not more than **3000 words** will be due by **1 November 2021**. While the conference will be held in hybrid mode, we hope it will be possible for some of the presenters to participate in-person and look forward to welcoming them at IIT Bhilai. There will be no registration fee, neither for participation nor for attendance. One of the conference outputs will likely be a special issue in a journal relevant to the field. Please feel free to write to **dept\_la@iitbhilai.ac.in** for any queries.

Conference Committee:

Anubhav Pradhan, IIT Bhilai

Rachna Mehra, Ambedkar University Delhi

Sonal Jha, IIT Bhilai

Anni Lappela, University of Helsinki

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