

SADAN JHA

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Professional Status

Assistant Professor, *Centre for the Social Studies*, Surat. The Centre has been a well recognized research organization in Social Sciences in India. Affiliated to Indian Council of Social Science Research under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, it is known for its autonomous voice representing a tradition of intellectually insightful and empirically rigorous research initiatives.

Research Interests:

Visuality, Memory, Belongingness and Urban experiences.

With an academic training in Modern Indian History, my study aims to get an understanding of visuality by mobilizing experiences of the non-modern. This involves an engagement with a wide range of thematic threads including memory, belongingness, land and literature. In the past, my research has addressed areas i.e. the history of symbols (focused on three popular symbols of twentieth century India: Indian National Flag, Spinning Wheel and 'Bharat Mata' (Mother India), documenting lives of victims, perpetrators and witnesses of Partition of Indian Subcontinent during 1946-1950 and an exploration of *scopic-regimes* of everyday urban experiences.

Current Research Projects

Contested Symbols: Genealogy of Indian National Flag and Spinning Wheel

This is an attempt to understand the politics that go into the making of various discourses and ways of looking at two symbols, The Indian National Flag and the Spinning Wheel. These two symbols do not merely act as an entry point to unearth meanings of political cultural practices but at moments of production of its various narratives they also become sites where claims on number of themes i.e. nationhood and citizenship are made and contested. A number of such events and processes are explored and analysed in a framework creatively using both macro as well as micro-historical perspectives. The focus, however, would be more on dispersed narratives, political debates and discursive constructs in the genealogy of these two political symbols. To achieve abovementioned objectives this study will draw its resources both from the field as well as from the archives. So far, three articles are published from this study and I am working to publish a book for which an international publisher has agreed *in principle*. A tentative time frame for this research is two years (2008-2010). ICHR has provided small grant to cover archival research within India.

Experiences of City Life: Contemporary Surat and the Question of Belongingness

The proposed study aims to document the everyday life of Surat by focusing on the changing dynamics of localities and social composition. Looking at the changing landscape of the city and its social fabric in the last thirty years, the scope of the proposed study is further narrowed down by focusing on the narratives of belongingness in an urban context of Surat. In this way, it is proposed to explore the category of contemporary everyday urban experiences as a constellation of narratives of localities, events, public spaces and social relationships particularly highlighting the question of belongingness in the changing milieu of this city. The core question asked is how does politics of belongingness shape the Urban life in Surat in the last three decades. Focused on this question, the

proposal is to produce a thick description of city life, its localities and people's perceptions of the dynamics of change in Surat. The broader question is how to approach this amorphous and less explored, but a heterogeneous field of urban experiences.

Publications (A Select List)

- "Indian National Flag as A Site of Daily Plebiscite", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. XLIII, no.43, October 25, 2008, pp: 102-111.
- "On Listening to Violence: Reflections of a Researcher of The Partition of India", *Sarai Reader 06: Turbulence*, Sarai, CSDS, Delhi, 2006.
<http://www.sarai.net/publications/readers/06-turbulence>
- "The Mythic (Non)Presence of the Other in the Text of Indian Nation-ness", in Anna Branach-Kallas and Katarzyna Wieckowska (eds.), *The Nation of the Other : Construction of Nation in Contemporary Cultural and Literary Discourses*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika, Torun (Poland), 2004.
- "Charkha, 'Dear Forgotten Friend' of Widows: Reading the Erasures of a Symbol", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. XXXIX, No.28, July 10, 2004.
- "Life and Times of Bharat Mata", *Manusi*, no.124, August 2004.
- "*Sadak ki Ankhe, Shahar ki Kahani*", Deewan-i- Sarai02: Shaharnama, Sarai, CSDS and Vaani Prakashan, Delhi, 2004.
- "*Santosh Radio ne gadhe Insaani rishte*", *Media Nagar 02*, Sarai, CSDS and Vaani Prakashan, Delhi, 2004.
- A long Interview with Prof. Ashis Nandy, a renowned political scientist in *Bahuvachan(VII)*, a journal of Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, 2002.
- A long Interview with Prof. Sumit Sarkar, an eminent historian, published in *Deshkal*.
- A Review Article in *Seminar*, vol.525, May 2003.
- "*Hawaon main Hindi*", *Hansa*, January, 2003.
- Interview with Sudhish Pachauri in *Madhumati*, 2002.
- Articles and book reviews in various Hindi magazines and journals.
- A Review Article in *Seminar*, vol.561, May 2006.

Education

Waiting for the result of **Ph.D.** from the Department of History, University of Delhi on the topic, "Visualizing the Nation: Gender and the Symbolic Constitution of the Nationhood in late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century North India". The dissertation was **submitted** (September 2008) for the evaluation and award.

Papers Presented (A Select List)

- "Spinning the *Swaraj*: Gendered History and the Mythic Body of a Gandhian Symbol", presented in *Social Development and the Human Civilization in the 21st Century*, An International Seminar on the Centenary of *Hind Swaraj*, 12–14 February 2009, Delhi.
- "Locality, Time and Nation: Purnea, Phaniswarnath Renu and 1950s", An International *Conference on Thinking Territory: Affect and Attachment Towards Land in South Asia*, Forum on Contemporary Theory Baroda, 16-19 December 2007, Goa.
- *Listening in the Archive, Listening for the Archive: History, Memory and the Archive*, International Colloquium on Information, Society, History and Politics, *Sensor-Census-Censor: Investigating*

Regimes of Information, Registering Changes of State, Sarai-CSDS, 30th November, 1 & 2 December, 2006.

•“*Visualizing the Nation: Gender and the Symbolic Construction of Nationhood in colonial and post-colonial north India*” Presented in an international workshop on “*Gender and Visuality*” organised by University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, SEPHIS, University of Michigan, National Research Foundation and the Journal ‘Gender and History’. The workshop was held in Cape Town, South Africa, 26-29 August 2004.

•“*Likho Script Apna Apna (Write Your Own Script) : Aesthetics of Language and the Body of the City*” Presented in a workshop on *Language, Media and Urban Politics*, Sarai, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi 2-3 April 2004.

•“The Indian National Flag as a Site of Daily Plebiscite” presented in Seventh Subaltern Studies Conference, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi 6-10 January 2004.

•“Bharat Mata as a Site of Invented Religious Traditions in Colonial and Post Colonial India”, Presented in an International Conference on *Indic Religions* organized by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and The International Association for the History of Religions. Delhi 18-22 December 2002.

•“Transforming Characters, Violent Landscapes and Representations of Mass Violence: A Case Study of ‘Partition Films’,” Presented in Film and History Workshop, Sarai, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, 11-13 December 2003.

•“Listening Violence, Doing Research: Partition violence and ethnographies of memories”, presented in Manan Library, Block S.527, Greater Kailash, New Delhi, 11 September 2003.

•“Visualising the Nation: Gender and the Symbolic Nationhood: Some Methodological Problems”, Presented in Cultural Studies Workshop in CSCS, Bangalore, 11-12 July, 2003.

•“*Many Worlds of Dakvachans: The Folk, the Literature and the Ethnography of Weather Knowledge Systems*”. Presented in a seminar organised by the Centre for the Creative Writing and Publication, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India. January 6-8, 2003.

•“*Reading Mithila Paintings*” in a seminar on Art and Archaeology in Mithila, Darbhanga, Bihar. 1998.

•“*Urbanization of Delhi: Role of Internal Forces.*” Presented in a seminar at St. Stephens College , Delhi University, Delhi, 1994.

•“*Women in the World of Manto.*” Presented in a seminar on “*Gender, History and Society*”, at Indraprastha College, Delhi University, Delhi. 1995.

Research Experience

•Worked in *Sarai* as a Project Associate from April 2002 to August 2007. *Sarai* is a programme of the **Centre for the Study of Developing Societies**, one of India's best known research centres, with old tradition of dissent and a commitment to public intellectual discourse. *Sarai* is South Asia's first public initiative research on Urban Culture, media and daily life. The work profile included coordinating an academic outreach programme (“Student Stipendship for the Research on the City”) engaging research scholars and urban practitioners from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds who were located in different parts of India. I coordinated this stipendship programme for five years working closely with a widely distributed network of research scholars and academicians.

•Worked as a Research Fellow on a project, **Reconstructing Lives** at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. Focused on the partition of India, this project was the largest study so far carried out in the Social Sciences exploring multiple dimensions of mass violence. My work was to conduct long semi-structured interviews with witnesses, victims and perpetrators of the violence caused by the partition of Indian Subcontinent in 1947. Areas of my eight months field work include Delhi, Ajmer, Jaipur and the neighboring villages of Jammu. This has been a difficult and enriching ethnographic experience. The chief investigator of the project was **Prof. Ashis Nandy**. The duration of the work was from August 2001-April 2002.

- Worked on a joint project, "Shaher ke Nishan: Politics of the Visual Symbolic Spaces of the City: A Case Study of Delhi" under the **Independent Research Fellowship scheme of Sarai** in 2002. The project was about documenting and analyzing the politics that go into the making of vast and scattered field of ordinary visual representations of the city of Delhi. The project was re-awarded with the fellowship second time in 2003.

- Three years research experience as a research scholar in **M.Phil** course in the **Department of History, Delhi University**. During this period I worked on the history of two popular symbols--The Indian National Flag and Charkha (Spinning Wheel). Problems related to the history of representations, political culture of colonial India and gendered readings of representations were addressed in this work. The topic of the research was "The Indian National Flag and the Charkha: Representing Nation and Nationalism in Colonial India."

- Worked as a Research Scholar in **Chintan** Environmental Research and Action Group, Delhi from October2000-April2001. The work included doing ethnography, coordinating research projects and proposals, and report writing. During the period, I worked on three research projects: "Upgrading Environmental Quality of Delhi: A study of the Informal Sector of Solid Waste Management." The project involved extensive field work and the focus of the study was on the socio-economic dynamics of the Informal sector of solid waste in Circle III of NDMC and Central Zone of MCD. The exploitation along gender line, the micro politics of this sector and the health problems of ragpickers were specially highlighted in the study. "Effects of Toxic Chemicals on Biodiversity." A sub-thematic literature survey, this project was sponsored by NBSAP of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. A wide range of secondary literature was surveyed and people were approached in the course of this project. The sub theme of the project was the effects of toxic chemicals on Indian Wildlife. Worked towards preparation of "A Manual of Municipal Solid Waste Rules 2000.

Awards

- Best Student Award 1994-95, History Department, Hansraj College, Delhi University.
- Certificate of Merit for securing first position in the college and third position in Delhi University in B.A.(Hons.) History. 1995
- All India Post Graduate Scholarship for the year 1995-96, University of Delhi.
- Special Prize in the All India Essay Competition on "One Billion Indians: The Road Ahead Challenges and Opportunities", conducted by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Unnati Features. 2000.
- Various prizes at school and college levels.

Teaching Experience

- Taught *M.A Ahimsa (non-violence)* Course in Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha as a visiting Lecturer, 2003.
- Taught as an *Ad-Hoc lecturer* in Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi. Delhi, 1999.

Father's Name: Late Dr.Ushakar Jha

Date of Birth: 14-04-1975.