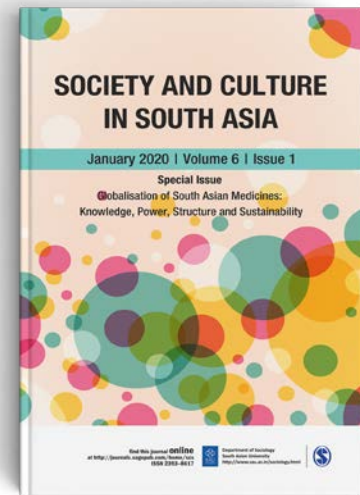


**Society and Culture in South Asia** is a peer-reviewed journal publishing articles in the fields of sociology, social anthropology in the main with an interest in education, visual studies, cultural studies, politics of mass media and urban studies. The journal is open to other related disciplines and interest areas as well to maintain an interdisciplinary thrust. The journal publishes research papers, review-essays, book reviews, photo essays, interviews, opinions and debates in the temperament of qualitative and critical sociology.



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**Special Issue of *Society and Culture in South Asia* on  
'Social' Distancing, COVID-19 and South Asian Experiences**  
Guest Editor: *Ishita Dey, South Asian University*

Certain words have gone viral since the spread of the global pandemic of COVID 19—social distancing, lockdown, and quarantine. The global medical fraternity under the aegis of the World Health Organisation has issued several rounds of advisories on the avoidance of human touch. Touch is one of the senses that shapes our sociability. Given that the history of the making of the 'social' in South Asia is marked by political conflict, ethnonationalism, forced migration, enmeshed with intersectionalities of gender, caste, ethnicity, tribe, race, it would be important to examine the social-cultural ramifications of the health advisory on 'social distancing'. One of the important steps to ensure social distancing between affected and suspected is the measure to 'quarantine'. Self-quarantine along with state-supported quarantine facilities have mushroomed across cities near ports of entry (particularly airports) to contain the spread. If every epoch had a governance strategy to contain the spread of diseases, COVID 19 has brought in an era of governance through 'lockdown'.

This special issue seeks to understand the lived experiences of a cross-section of human lives impacted by COVID 19. Given the complex cultural meanings around 'touch' in South Asia and the ostracization of communities through practices of commensality, linguistic nationalism, ethnonationalism and forced migration, with COVID 19, how would one revisit the idea of 'social' as South Asian nation states struggle with a global pandemic. South Asian region is not immune to epidemics. Historiographical studies on epidemics show how certain diseases like malaria (across Ceylon, Bengal) and black fever were viewed as threats to the project of colonisation. Kalinga Tudor Silva (2008) goes on to demonstrate how the late nineteenth and early twentieth century tropical medicine facilitated identification of localised tropical fevers such as malaria, and soon there was a seamless association of the tropics with such epidemics. Given South Asian experience of epidemics, it becomes important to understand how COVID 19 will change the meaning of the 'social' post lockdown.

**We invite contributions in the form of articles (7000 words), opinion pieces (3000 words), interviews (2000 words) and photo essays (12 photos and a writeup of 600 words) based on South Asian experiences of living in the times of COVID 19 under the following themes:**

- Politics of epidemic and pandemic
- State response to COVID 19
- Education in times of COVID 19
- Stigma, touch and tracing
- Medical infrastructure in times of COVID
- Migrant workers in waiting
- 'Work from home' and meanings of work
- Art in times of COVID
- Food security, hunger and starvation
- COVID and popular media

**Timeline:**

All contributions should reach the following email address with the words, **COVID SPECIAL ISSUE** on the subject line, by **31 July 2020:**  
[journal.sociology@soc.sau.ac.in](mailto:journal.sociology@soc.sau.ac.in)

**For additional information including stylistics issues, please visit:**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/scsa>

**Publication date: January 2021**



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submission guidelines**