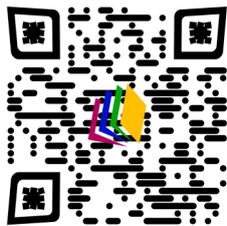


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Soldering as Work, Work for Livelihood: The Discourse of 'Outsiders within' among the Nepalese Migrants' of North East India

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ABSTRACT:

This paper proposes to understand the historical meaning of the concept of “work” within the changing definition of labour relations and their social status. This turn in the labour relations reveal two aspects: first, how the “world of work” can be conceptualized through the performance in a disciplinary apparatus rendered to the service of the nation (Geoffrey Field, 2011), and in analyzing the cases of the historical past where it is seen how the bodies of the workers were placed for the cost of the production in the British colonies (Dipesh Chakraborty, 2002). This paradox though helps us better understand the dynamicity of a work regime, but yet unanswered of how work defines social status.

The proposed paper has made an attempt to fill this gap through an analysis of the recruitment of the Gurkhas (a martial race among the Nepalese) in the British imperial army and the importation of the Nepalese migrants (other than Gurkhas) for various colonial pursuits especially in the plantations, mining and railways which were based in north east India. This will be followed by looking into the dimension of how the presence of the Nepalese population in north east India has become a matter of concern to the post-colonial political discourse which led to the emergence of the idea of social ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ within the Nepalese speaking community based on their occupational status.

In tracing these trajectories, I will take the attention of the reader to the third section of the paper where the emphasis is given to locating the ‘factors’ responsible for the growing concern of social exclusion among the labouring population of the Nepalese whereas the social status of the Gurkhas is marked safe remembering their wartime mobilization of labor. The paper will conclude by discussing how the wave of nationalism and sub-nationalism has been working as driving force for cultivating the field of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ respectively in many parts of north east India.

KEY WORDS: Nepalese, Labour, Military, Inclusion, Exclusion.