

# Millennial Asia

## An International Journal of Asian Studies



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Special Issue on **Women in South and Southeast Asian Diaspora**

Guest Editors: **Dr. Anindita Dasgupta**, *Associate Professor (Social History)* and **Dr. Vandana Saxena**, *Senior Lecturer (English Literature), School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Taylor's University, MALAYSIA*

**Concept Note:**

'....past is a country from which we have all emigrated...'

**Salman Rushdie**, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991, 1992*

**Millennial Asia: An International Journal of Asian Studies** invites contributions for a special issue titled 'Women in South and Southeast Asian Diaspora'.

Why do women leave their homelands and travel to foreign destinations? Are their motivations to migrate similar to those of the men? Do gender and cultural constructions of womanhood within communities influence women to undertake such journeys into the unknown? Are they active agents in the decision to migrate, or are there undercurrents of gendered expectations, even coercion, propagated by socio-cultural conventions that condition them to believe in the "rightness" of the destination? Or are they, like their male counterparts, impacted by the same socio-political and economic compulsions to seek safe haven or the proverbial 'greener pastures' outside the countries of their origin?

Diaspora itself is a highly complex and contested concept that requires continuous and rigorous unpacking. First used during the Classical Age, referring primarily to the Greeks, Jews and Armenians, in recent times the term has been gaining greater importance as the current socio-political environment is creating new population displacements of unprecedented dimensions globally. Typically, diaspora is derived from the Greek word *diaspeirō* which denotes 'scattering' and specifically refers to dispersal of a population of the same origin beyond the frontiers of its own homeland. The notions of dispersal, homeland and connectivity are generally considered to be the defining characteristics of diasporic communities worldwide. However, these essential characteristics are yet to be critiqued in various different ways in order to capture looming complexities and oft-contradictory layers of the diasporic condition. Diaspora studies is also fast gaining prominence with the diasporic communities emerging as policy relevant in their countries of adoption or citizenship. However, most of the studies in the field have concentrated on the experiences of diasporic communities in the West. There is a dearth of voices from the diasporic communities from Asia, and in Asia. The gap becomes even greater when one approaches the field via women's studies, specifically those concentrating on the experiences of South and Southeast Asian women.

This special issue of Millennial Asia is devoted to problematizing the tensions within diasporic communities in South and Southeast Asia seen through the lens of gender and women's issues and concerns. It aims to enrich and enlarge the field of Diasporic studies by creating a new body of knowledge that brings to fore the narratives and concerns of South and Southeast Asian women. The focus is multidisciplinary. The editors are interested in methodological, theoretical and empirical studies that can contribute to the development of Diaspora studies in relation to gender in Asian context. We invite contributions focusing on the complexities of the diasporic communities in matters of displacement, gender politics and legalities. We also welcome submissions analyzing the rich diasporic narratives in art (photography), fiction (print, theater, film, television) and new media (social, digital, screen).

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

1. The politics of identity and its contestations and representations
2. Cultural context of gender in relation to migration, the process of becoming diasporic, cultural conflicts and adaptations.
3. Family as a contested space. While displacement alters traditional roles and expectations, policies and laws pertaining to citizenship, employment rules and migration policy often have bearing on the traditional familial set up
4. Collation of gender with class and labour issues, generational differences and racial and ethnic concerns
5. Artistic, (social) media and literary representations of women of South and Southeast Asian diaspora
6. Women and the migration experience : voluntary or involuntary; documented or undocumented
7. Second or third generation women within diasporas
8. The ' Nowhere (Wo)man' : between culture, memory and nationality

We invite abstracts (upto 300 words) of potential papers to be submitted by **10<sup>th</sup> April 2017**. Authors of selected abstracts will be informed by **17<sup>th</sup> May 2017**. Complete papers are required to be submitted to Millennial Asia by **25<sup>th</sup> July 2017**.

For any communication for the special issue and submission of papers, please simultaneously email to **Professor Sukhpal Singh** email: [sukhpal@iima.ac.in](mailto:sukhpal@iima.ac.in), **Professor Lakhwinder Singh** email: [lakhwindergill@pbi.ac.in](mailto:lakhwindergill@pbi.ac.in) and **Associate Professor Dr. Anindita Dasgupta** email: [draninditad@gmail.com](mailto:draninditad@gmail.com)