



FROBENIUS-INSTITUT
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE
FORSCHUNG

Call for application Summer School 2025

Gods, Fields, Minds and Mines: Conversion, Agriculture, Education and Extractivism in India

Time: 16.-22. June 2025

Place: Haus Bergkranz, Sport- und Studiengästehaus der Goethe-Universität, Kleinwalsertal, Österreich

Organizers: Peter Berger (University of Groningen), Roland Hardenberg (University of Frankfurt / Frobenius Institute), Sarbeswar Sahoo (Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi)

At first sight, the selection of topics for this Summer School may seem random. What, if anything, have conversion, education, agriculture and mining in common? In recent years, however, new connections have been forged between a range of social actors and institutions in India in relation to the appropriation of georesources that hold immense economic significance. This situation makes a close connection between land, livelihoods, religion and industrial interests evident and an urgent issue to research.

Concurrently, a number of state institutions are undergoing modifications that align them with extractivist objectives, namely the efficient appropriation of georesources. For instance, the establishment of so-called „factory schools“ is underway with the objective of transferring pupils from rural areas to urban settings, where they can be prepared for work in industry and technology, thereby also alienating them from their local background. In the field of agriculture, novel techniques and initiatives are being devised in continuation of the Green Revolution with the aim of ensuring food security in the context of climate change, particularly in relation to water scarcity. In regions with abundant raw materials, where resistance movements such as the Naxalites impede the optimal exploitation of these georesources, the state has resorted to military intervention. Concurrently, the groundwork is being laid for the infrastructural development of these areas (for instance the construction of roads), which can then be utilized for extractive activities such as mining. This phenomenon is concomitant with a process of religious and cultural transformation of the local population, whereby local practices and identities are displaced and ties to previous habitats are eroded.

Conversely, a number of actors and institutions are engaged in resisting this form of state-imposed extractivism, which is supported by private industry, and are promoting and developing alternative practices. Such initiatives include educational establishments founded on indigenous epistemological and pedagogical principles, agricultural projects designed to enhance food sovereignty, and the revitalisation of indigenous (including religious) practices that reinforce the identity and cohesion of local communities.

The objective of the summer school is to gain an understanding of these diverse and complex entanglements through the discussion of ethnographic examples and theoretical reflections and to gain insight into the interests, values and visions for the future of the various people, stakeholders and institutions involved. In order to achieve this objective, the participants will engage in the discussion of selected texts, and will also have the opportunity to benefit from the insights and experiences of academics from Germany, England, India and the Netherlands, who will present their findings from field research in their respective domains. Furthermore, the individual topics will be subjected to rigorous and constructive debate within the context of small working groups in which we also hope to include local activists.



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Who are the lecturers?

Dr. Peter Berger (Groningen University, Netherlands), Aswina Gomango (Kalahandi University, India), Malvika Gupta (Oxford University), Prof. Dr. Roland Hardenberg (Goethe-University, Germany), Sharanya Nayak (Odisha, India), Prof. Dr. Sarbeswar Sahoo (IITD, India)

Who can apply?

Participants: The winter school is meant for students who are enrolled in a BA or MA/M.Phil programme in social and cultural anthropology, who have an interest in these topics and think about engaging in research in this field in the future. Early PhD students may also apply.

How to apply?

To apply, please submit a letter of motivation (one page), a short curriculum vitae, and a list of previous India-related courses or activities to u.paul@em.uni-frankfurt.de by 31. January 2025

Contribution Fees:

Financial contribution for students: students pay for train & bus tickets (place of residence to Haus Bergkranz, Kleinwalsertal, Österreich and back to place of residence) themselves.

What will you receive?

Digital copies of the course material and program

Participation/completion certificate signed by representatives of the partnering institutions

Breakfast, lunch packet, dinner during the summer school

Free accommodation in Haus Bergkranz (in multi-bed room) from 16.-22. June 2025

For further information you may contact the organizers:

Prof. Dr. Roland Hardenberg: Hardenberg@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Dr. Peter Berger: p.berger@rug.nl

Prof. Dr. Sarbeswar Sahoo: Sarbeswar.Sahoo@hss.iitd.ac.in



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