

CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND
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SOUTH ASIA
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Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

Department of Political Science

Special Lecture

on

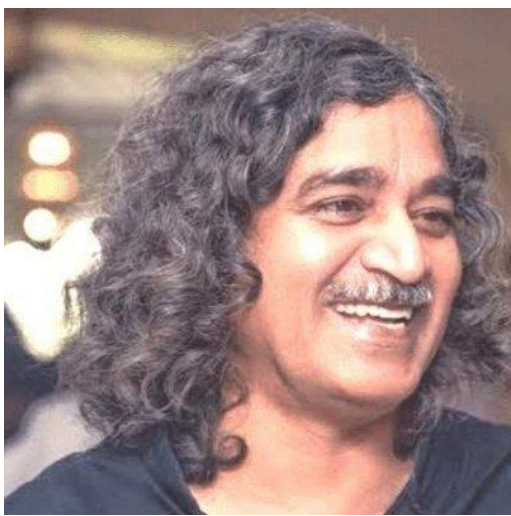
Missing Migrant Voters in India

by

Professor Ashwani Kumar

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Political exclusion of migrants is commonplace in various parts of the world, but internal migrants are among the most marginalized and disenfranchised in India. While there is a vast body of literature on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of internal migrants in India, there is little understanding about their participation in elections and politics in India. According to various estimates, India has over 450 million internal migrants, who account for more than one-third of its population of 1.4 billion. While much of this migration is permanent, a very substantial portion of it is temporary and circulatory. As tragically highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is this segment of short-term migrants that faces relatively greater bureaucratic, political, and policy barriers in enhancing its livelihood opportunities and exercising its voting rights. Extending analytical insights from Myron Weiner's classic work on the 'sons of the soil', and using the new generation of studies on the thesis of 'missing migrant voters', the lecture interrogates evidence of a vast democratic deficit among India's internal migrants, and brings back the idea of citizenship to the centre of the contested relationship between the state and internal migrants in India.



Ashwani Kumar is Professor and Dean, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai). His widely acclaimed books include *Community Warriors* (2009); *Global Civil Society 2009: Poverty and Activism* (chief ed., 2009); and *Migrants, Mobility and Citizenship in India* (ed., 2021). He has served as Member of the Central Employment Guarantee Council, Government of India, and monitored the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in various states of India. He is also a visiting fellow at leading global universities and think tanks, including the German Development Institute, Korea Development Institute, and University of Sussex. He writes regularly in *Financial Express*, *The Hindu*, *Outlook India*, and *The Print*, among others. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Oklahoma (USA).

Date: Friday, July 22, 2022

Time: 14:00 – 16:00, CET

Venue: CATS, room 130.00.02, building 4130

Online: via Zoom. For the Zoom registration, please send an email at: polsai@sai.uni-heidelberg.de