



ZMO-Colloquium

Thursday, 27 June 2019, 5 pm

Maids in Movement: Domestic Workers and Trade Unions in India

Lecture by **Samita Sen** (University of Cambridge)

Following Convention 189 (2011) of the ILO, domestic workers have emerged as a significant category of workers and as subjects of both women's and workers' politics. They have posed challenging questions of class and gender, which the mainstream in both these movements have found difficult to answer. While there has been considerable associational activity in different parts of the world, there are also new and emerging challenges. How does the new phase of automation impact the nature and organization of care economies, within which domestic work is increasingly conceptualized? What do these developments signal for possibilities of 'class'-based collective action?

In the Indian context, associations of domestic workers, few and small no doubt, are demanding the status of trade unions. This is a dynamic moment and both working conditions, as well as movements, are being continually redefined. It is in this context that the paper will seek to explore the workers own relationship with and responses to attempts at collectivization.

Samita Sen received her Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1992. She won the Trinity College Prize Fellowship earlier, in 1990. She taught History at Calcutta University and Women's Studies

at Jadavpur University from 1994 to 2018. She was First Vice-Chancellor, Diamond Harbour Women's University, 2013-2015. She was Dean, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (Jadavpur University), 2016-2018. Her monograph, *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) won the Trevor Reese Prize in Commonwealth History. She is a member of editorial boards of various academic journals, including *Modern Asian Studies* and *South Asian History and Culture*. She is on the advisory board of Review of Women's Studies, *Economic and Political Weekly*. She edited *Global South: Sephis e-Magazine*, a south-south platform for young scholars, from 2004 to 2014. She was a member of the governing body of Calcutta Mahanirvana Research Group (2014-2018) and General Secretary to the Indian Association of Women's Studies (2008-2011). She has been a member of a Calcutta-based voluntary association of women, *Sachetana*, since 1983.

Venue

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