

History, State-Adivasi Relations, and Ecology of belonging in Nepal's Tarai: Reflections from Fursad Ethnography

28 April 2019, Sunday

Janak Rai, PhD

Associate Professor, Central Department of Anthropology
Tribhuvan University

Abstract:

Following my PhD dissertation research (2013) with the Dhimal people, I have been interested in exploring the social history of malaria by way of listening to stories Tarai adivasi narrate about how their ancestors lived when many part of Nepal's lowlands were densely forested and thinly populated. This presentation will be based on piecemeal and fragmentary field level interactions which I have continued with people from the Tarai adivasi communities over the last five years, in the form of what I like to call fursad ethnography. Drawing on my previous works and ongoing fursad ethnography, I will highlight how the Tarai adivasi's past experience of living and thriving in the apparent adverse ecological conditions (havapani) of the region informs their understanding of adivasi identity, and inter-ethnic relations vis-à-vis the landlord state.