

# Seminar: Conversations on Social Reproduction

**TITLE:** The work of preparing for work: Education and skills training as social reproduction

**SPEAKER:** Dr Asiya Islam

**WHEN:** Friday May 6th, 12-1pm BST/4:30-5:30pm IST

**WHERE:** Teams; [Follow the link to register](#)



Asiya Islam is a Lecturer in Work and Employment Relations, University of Leeds. She is interested in emerging gender, class, and labour relations. Her current research includes long-term ethnography with young, lower middle class women in service work in Delhi, India, and a project-in-progress on gender, digital technology, and the future of work in India.

Drawing upon ethnographic research with young, lower middle class women in Delhi, India, I argue that their engagements with education and skills training constitute work on a continuum with their employment in services. Recent scholarship has explored the burgeoning of skills training centres in India offering courses in English speaking, computers, and personality development with the aim to bridge the 'skills' gap. Framed in terms of 'skills', these courses train young people to fit into corporate class cultures. Along with enrolling in short-term skills courses, young women in Delhi also pursue undergraduate and postgraduate degrees through distance learning. Higher education qualifications afford them an entry into the competitive service jobs market. As such, while their education and training in itself does not generate any income, it is an investment into better futures. Young women articulate and moderate their participation in educational and training activities as work. They join skills training courses when in between jobs and may even quit their paid work to prepare for upcoming exams. Scholars have argued that people rely on multiple forms of labour to sustain precarious lives. In this seminar, I explore young women's participation in education and skills training as unpaid labour and ask – what is the political value of understanding the work of preparing for work through the frame of social reproduction?

**LAWS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION:** For more information about the project or to join the network, please email [Prabha.kotiswaran@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:Prabha.kotiswaran@kcl.ac.uk). The Laws of Social Reproduction project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (under grant agreement No. 772946)



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