

Conference

We will organise four events through this Network from March 2022 till March 2024. The first two are academic conferences in Edinburgh, UK and Guwahati, India in Sep 2022 and Jan 2023. There will be a public talk and an authors' workshop at the National Library of Scotland, Sep 2023, and a public engagement event in Kolkata, Dec 2023.

Please see below a call for papers for the conferences:

'The British Empire, Scotland, and Indian Famines: A Royal Society of Edinburgh Research Network' presents two conferences on

The British Empire and Colonial Famines: History, Culture, Critique

University of Edinburgh and IIIT Guwahati

Sep 8-9, 2022 and Jan 7-8, 2023

Between 1845 and 1879, a number of devastating famines occurred in Ireland, India, and Cape Colony – colonies of the British empire – killing millions of people. While the Great famines of Ireland (1845) and Bengal (1943) have received widespread scholarly and public attention, critical discussions of other famines have not been consistent. In these two (in-person) conferences at Edinburgh, the UK, and Guwahati, India, part of our Royal Society of Edinburgh Research Network, we will bring together scholars interested in famine studies to interrogate colonial famines in the British empire – especially their history, representation, critique, policy, and debates. While in no way limited to the famines above, we look forward to papers that will read the historical, administrative, journalistic, non-fictional, literary, and cultural works of colonial famines in the British Empire with an aim to address some of the key questions of the Network which are: why did

famines occur so frequently in the British Empire? How were these famines represented in literature and media and drawn upon for health, administration, empire and anti-colonialism related campaigns? How did these famines shape health and hygiene discourses in the Empire? Did the famines and their representations give birth to new literary and artistic style? How was the Famine Prevention envisioned and implemented? In what ways has postcolonial food policy drawn from colonial famine prevention? How have these famines been memorialised in the postcolonial period?

Scottish writers, administrators, and political economists such as Adam Smith, WW Hunter, George Campbell, Richard Baird Smith, James Caird, and Linlithgow, among others, played key roles in the famine debates including on famine relief, agricultural policies, and implementing prevention in the British Empire. We also look to explore, preferably in the Edinburgh iteration, Scottish roles in the British colonial famines through the following questions: Do recent experiences of scarcity and famine in the Highlands as well as the Irish famine immigration shape Scottish responses to Indian famines? How do the Scots write about famines (including genre, style, and technique)? What do we understand about imperialist ideologies, counter-ideologies, and practices from those writings? How do their work influence Indian writers and critics?

Papers may address but need not be limited to the topics below:

Colonialism, Imperialism, famines

Scotland, the British Empire, and famines

Colonial famines and their prevention

Famines and body, health, hygiene

Famines and society (race; class; caste; gender and sexuality)

Famine, hunger, poverty

Famines, famine relief, activism

Famines, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism

Famines and food policy

Famines through literature and writing

Famines in visual and performative art

Memorialising famines

Colonial famines in comparative reading

Famines and hunger in the postcolonial period

Please send 200-word abstracts and 100-word bio-notes to the email address: indianfaminesnetworkrse@gmail.com by **Monday, May 30, 2022**. Confirmation of acceptance of papers will be sent by **Monday, June 6, 2022**. Please mention in the document which iteration of the conference (Edinburgh/Guwahati) you would like to attend. Technology permitting, we will record the conference presentations. We have a small number of partial travel bursaries available for postgraduate students. Please mention in your covering email if you would like to be considered for travel bursary.

Conference organisers:

Dr Sourit Bhattacharya, University of Edinburgh, UK

Dr Rajarshi Mitra, Indian Institute of Information Technology
Guwahati, India

Dr Binayak Bhattacharya, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of
Technology, India

Conference Registration fee: we are planning to waive the registration fee (depending on securing additional budget). In

case there is a fee, it will be low and case-by-case basis.

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