

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/carceral-entrapments-views-from-the-prison-street-interface-in-india/>

This video is a transcript of a discussion led by an academic focusing on their research related to contemporary Indian culture, specifically regarding the experiences of prisoners and marginalized communities. The speaker reflects on their doctoral fieldwork conducted in a West Bengal prison. They observed a phenomenon of "narrative inversion" among young male prisoners, who perceived incarceration as a space of possibility in contrast to their constrained neighborhoods.

The speaker elaborates on the concept of "castral culture," highlighting how environments outside prison, such as neighborhoods and streets, can exhibit similar dynamics of control and marginalization. They discuss the methodological challenges of studying criminal lives and assert that the phenomena of hyper-incarceration, hyper-surveillance, and the presence of carceral conditions extend beyond prison walls into the lives of those categorized as disposable by the state.

The speaker emphasizes the importance of using ethnographic methods to uncover underrepresented voices and critique the tendency to generalize findings from individual narratives. They specifically highlight the experiences of women prisoners and local "goons," showing how their stories reveal societal vulnerabilities and tensions.

Additionally, the speaker critiques the processes that define and maintain disposability within communities, linking it to broader societal structures and state actions that aim to isolate and control certain populations. They call for a recognition of the complexity of these issues and suggest a need for a decolonial perspective in academic research, arguing that a comprehensive understanding of prison and societal structures must consider a range of intersecting influences, including patriarchal family dynamics and socio-political factors.