

SASA 10:



**India at the
Crossroads**

The SASA Tenth Anniversary Conference

**March 18-20, 2016
TERI University
Plot No. 10 Institutional Area
Vasant Kunj
New Delhi**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MINOTI CHAKRAVARTY-KAUL



Professor Minoti Chakravarty-Kaul taught Economics at Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi, from 1961 until her retirement as Emerita in 2002. The community concerns over the distribution of common lands from the villages of a cluster in North West Delhi in 1977 sparked her research into common property, and ultimately resulted in her most famous work, *Common Lands and Customary Law: Institutional Change in the Past Two Centuries* (Oxford UP, 1996).

Throughout her career she worked closely with the 2009 Nobel Prize winner in Economic Science, Elinor Ostrom.

Her work has been recognized with a Fulbright Fellowship, a Ford Foundation Fellowship, a Ciriacy Wantrup Fellowship, and a University of California, Berkeley and The Shastri Indo-Canadian Fellowship.

She is the founder of the Raah Shamilat Research Group and the RAHAT Resource Center. She is also a founding member of the International Association for the Study of Commons. Her current work widens her geographic scope, but maintains her strict focus on the cause and the curse of the commons.

ABOUT SASA

OUR PURPOSE

The South Asian Studies Association was founded to promote scholarly study of and public interest in South Asian civilizations and affairs; to provide a public forum for the communication of research and scholarship on South Asia, by means of an annual conference; to promote scholarship and networking opportunities for scholars of South Asia between annual conferences through electronic and other media; to assist public and private cultural and educational agencies and institutions in the development and dissemination of programs and teaching materials on South Asia; by means of a newsletter, journal, or other such publications and programs as may be feasible for the association to undertake, to facilitate exchange of information among persons and accredited academic institutions interested in South Asian studies, to disseminate research results, and to further educate the general public about South Asian affairs; and to build bridges of understanding linking the academic, entrepreneurial and diaspora communities.



AVAILABLE ABSTRACTS

SESSION A

PANEL 1 Building Big Business

The Political Economy of Indo-Pak Cricket

Zarnaab Adil Janjua | New York University, USA

With both sides of the Wagha equally enthused by the game, cricket has always been used a key strategic tool by leaders on both sides. Be it the 1999 Chennai win, Zia-ul-Haq's small sojourn in Jaipur and more recently the 2011 World Cup semi-final where Premier Gillani and Singh shared a sofa and talked shop for much of the game. Simply put, cricket between India and Pakistan is inextricably linked to the political economy of South Asia

However politics, extremism and the dire urgency of Test Cricket between the two warring neighbours coupled with the bemusing arguments put forth by both boards to facilitate cricket at a neutral venue amounted to nothing. There was widespread speculation as to what caused the scheduled series between the two sides to be cancelled. Elections, Kolkata, Shiv Sainiks, Shaharyar Khan and political shrewdness were all cited as reasons.

It goes without saying that Indo-Pak cricket anywhere in the world has the potential to positively impact foreign relations and the political economy on both sides. This paper will examine the reasons which prevent bilateral cricket and weigh the pro's and con's of any series between the two foes.

Medical Tourism: A Mega-Service Industry

Shipra Srivastava | Christ Church College, Kanpur, India

The global growth in the flow of patient, health professionals along with medical technology, capital finding and regularly regimes across national borders has given rise to new patterns of consumption and production of health care services over recent decades. A significant new element of growing trade in health care has involved the movement of patients across borders in pursuit of medical treatment and health; a phenomenon commonly termed, medical tourism. India has positioned itself as an inexpensive destination for medical treatment compared with US and Europe. The vast pool of medical professional spending private healthcare infrastructure, growing technological expertise, cheaper medical procedures, world class health care infrastructure and government support is encouraging and boosting the medical tourist arrivals in India. As the cost of medical treatment and hospital queues gradually increase in western countries, the demand for medical services in India is gradually increasing. Medical tourism is likely to be the next major foreign exchange earner. This paper discusses the pros and cons of medical tourism and argues that while medical tourism has the potential to provide economic and employment opportunities in India there are also questions of equity and justice that need to be addressed by the Indian Government to its citizens.

The Nature of the Entrepreneurial Process in Medium-Scale Manufacturing Sector Enterprises in Sri Lanka

Rathnayake Mudiyansele Kumari | University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Entrepreneurial development has become very significant; in view of economic, social and personal development. The aim of this study was enhancement of knowledge concerning entrepreneurial process dynamics through an understanding of the input – output approach in medium scale manufacturing sector enterprises in Sri Lanka. The study focused on how different entrepreneurial inputs influence the performance of the enterprise, managing entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial intensity. The case study method was used and ten established medium scale manufacturing sector firms in Central Province, Sri Lanka were studied. Out of five key elements that contributed to the entrepreneurial process, dominating elements for capitalize upon the opportunity as well as factors that generate contains for entrepreneurial process were identified. The research revealed that

entrepreneurial intensity (EI) for the level of entrepreneurship within the process approach was low as a result of innovation, proactiveness and the level of risk taking initiatives. The analysis suggested a framework for addressing dominant factors for entrepreneurship that highlights the input-process-output nature of entrepreneurship in contexts in which they occur. Thus the study can help to understand the factors which influence organizational performance especially in dynamic and turbulent environments in Sri Lanka

PANEL 2 Going Green and Growing Green

The Greening of Indian Railways

Monish Gulati | Society for Policy Studies, New Delhi, India

Indian Railways (IR), one of the largest employers in India is also the biggest consumer of high speed diesel (HSD). Over the years IR has made sustained efforts to reduce its dependency on HSD, one of the most polluting of hydrocarbon fuels. These efforts have included fuel substitution, electrification and simply less use or consumption efficiency. The measures have been as diverse as planning a captive nuclear power plant, producing biofuels from waste oils to training of locomotive drivers. This paper would detail all these initiatives and their outcomes in achieving the IR's objective of "greening" itself.

Algal Biodiversity of the Yamuna River at Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh, India: A Biological Indicator of Water Quality

Ram Mohar Shukla | Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya, India

Wetlands offer unique environment supporting ideal habitats for auto and heterotrophic organisms. The pivotal role of these organisms with macrophytic flora and fauna cannot be measured in terms of their size, but the enormous magnitude of their role in totality of biodiversity is undisputed. Perhaps, biodiversity and biochemical convention could not throw light on species and gene pool preserve. India, the leading nation of third world, is a country richly endowed with wetlands. The different climatic regions, the variations in topography, the diversity of rainfalls, all have contributed to a wealth and diversity of wetland habitats.

River Yamuna, the largest tributary of river Ganga, originates from Yamunotri glacier at Barder Punch in the region of Simla. Several tributaries join it along its path, transforming it into a forth-order river. The present study emphasizes characteristics features of community structure and diversity of phytoplanktons of river Yamuna at Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh. The density and diversity of phytoplanktons and their association as biological indicator in the assessment of water quality has been made during present investigation.

Going Green: Environmental Awareness and Activism in the Hindu Traditions

Bhakti Mamtara | University of Florida, USA

Lance Nelson's *Purifying the Earthly Body of God* (1998) was one of the earliest edited volumes to consider a range of Hindu perspectives towards environmental ethics and conservation. While scholars like Harold Coward, have argued that karma theory or an awareness of how one's actions or lack thereof affect one's present and future lives, can inspire individuals to act in an ecologically sensitive manner, others, such as Kelly Alley have demonstrated how perceptions of the Ganga River as a benevolent, forgiving, compassionate mother and goddess, contributes to environmental degradation. Since then, scholars including Christopher Chapple and Jonathan Edelman, have examined how Hindu traditions understand and interact with nature in the contemporary period. This paper extends these considerations and revisits the question of whether the Hindu traditions lend themselves to an environmental ethic by analyzing both Hindu attitudes and practices towards ecological care. After outlining competing Hindu perspectives on the environment, I examine the ecological activities of BAPS Charities in India and the United States. I argue that the environmental efforts of a global non-governmental organization, like BAPS Charities, stem from a number of moral and religious ideas, such as the belief in the environment as a shared resource, compassion and harmonious living, and reflects local needs.

SESSION B

PANEL 3 Contemporary Caste

The Vacillating Dalit Movement in Contemporary India

Arushi Mathur | Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi, India

Prashant Shekhar | Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India

Abstract not available.

Transmuting Caste: Bhumihars in Bihar

Aniket Nandan | Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India

It has become momentous to explore caste as a unit rather than as a system to look at the identity and agency of the caste but also examine its associational structures. Theoretical considerations on caste such as Oriental and Indological perspectives, structural-functionalist approach, structuralism and intersectionality of caste, class and gender has shaped the discourses on caste in India. Recent developments of such discourses pertaining to demands of politicization and secularization have allowed castes to acquire new structural locations and identities.

The instance of breakdown of caste as a system authenticated by recent trajectories of caste studies is evident and has warranted for the study of single caste groups. Such a study will contribute towards the existing knowledge in a manner where it would decipher the negotiations between caste and modern secular democratic institutions.

This study takes up the Bhumihar community in Bihar as a case in point, devoted to delineate the contours of a caste in broader framework of continuity and change. Hence, a study on Bhumihars is not merely directed towards inquiring about an upper caste, rather addressing varied dimensions of the functionality of the caste in itself. As a overarching discussion, this study intends to analyse the dynamics of community and association within Bhumihars.

The Relevance of Kabir's Revealing Poetry of the Caste System to Modern Indian Society

Chathurini Fernando | University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Kabirdas, the greatest poet in the Nirguna Bhakthi, of the medieval era of Hindi Literature showed a strong protest against the division of social strata based on the caste system in the Indian society.

The people belonging to low cast had been deprived of human rights and entirely depended on prestigious social clan. Kabirdas criticizes disparities of the Indian society where privileged social class entertains social prestige despite all human beings have been created by the same root of blood.

The study was primarily concerned with the analysis of the relevance of Kabir's poetry revealing caste system to present Indian society. A number of related classical Indian texts, magazines and other literary materials were reviewed for critical analysis of his poems. The major findings suggest the significant contributory role of Kabir in revolutionizing the modern Indian thought. The study also reveals the relevance of Kabir's sociological ideologies, humanism and literary devices to contemporary Indian society.

As a whole, it can be concluded that Kabir's sociological beliefs and philosophical thoughts have had a drastic impact on shaping modern Indian value system towards a harmonies society free of caste discrimination.

PANEL 4 Reading Religiously

Yat Pinde Tat Brahmande

V. K. Katiyar | Brahmanand College, Kanpur, India

“Yat Pinde Tat Brahmande” is from Vedic literature which means “whatever is inside is outside,” or “you are a universe within the universe” and is the core to understand how the planetary situation and cosmic radiation

affects the life on the planet earth. Since we have been originated from the same cosmic egg therefore we may have entangled electron pairs and a change in electron spin somewhere in the universe may change spin of electron on earth. Birth takes place only when planetary situation and cosmic radiation is most favourable for the transformation of energy into mass. During this process energy is partially converted into mass and rest of energy surrounds mass popularly known as “aura.” As we grow, we are influenced by surrounding and consequently we move far from energy-mass equilibrium and experiences result of the Vimshottari Dasha System in astrology. Moon has deep impact on development of human being that is why the moon in constellation of a planet determines the sequence of Dasha system. This theory can further be extended to explain how the Rudraksha, Tantra, and other ritual have influences on human being. The concept of Kallpurush in astrology is consistent with the entangled electron pair theory of quantum physics.

Environmental Ethics as a Means of Social Transformation: Insights through the Religious Study of *Mahābhārata*

Geetesh Nirban | Kamala Nehru College, New Delhi, India

The paper proposes to discuss that a religious text with its ethical connotations can pave the way for social transformation. In light of this, I propose to bring forth issues concerning environmental ethics through study of Hindu epic *Mahābhārata* as a religious text to initiate and augment changes for societal wellbeing.

In the time of environmental crises when human society is looking for new sustaining relationships with nature, a probe into the interrelation between humanity and nature through the prism of religion helps in solving the problems caused due to egocentric perspectives and short-sighted needs. This study keeps *Mahābhārata* as the centre of analysis on account of its grandeur and scope which is best summarized within the epic as ‘...whatever is here...is found elsewhere. But what is not here is nowhere else’. As a text, it holds practical relevance in Indian subcontinent and this finds justification in Alf Hildebeitel’s statement that the *Mahābhārata* is a story that India has never ceased to rethink and retell.

Though war and violence are constant features of this epic, the study elucidates how a large part of this long narrative unfolds in the forest with natural, human and superhuman worlds in constant interaction with each other. The text displays a Hindu philosophical world view that all subjects of creation stand interwoven, leading to mutual dependency, sustainability and sensitivity.

Focusing on Vana Parvan and Anuśāsana Parvan of the text, the paper develops how the concept of dharma (righteousness) in *Mahābhārata* can be given a distinctly green or environmental dimension. Dharma understood in this way can amend the traditional notions of nature, mend the perceived cleavages between the natural and human caused due to the latter focusing on the domestication of and authorisation over the former, and pave way for the generation of environmental consciousness in the hour of present environmental catastrophe.

Gods, Nature, and History in the Literary Corpus of Kazi Nazrul Islam, 1900-1930

Samina Sirajuddowla | City College of New York, USA

After the liberation war of 1971, the Awami League government sanctified Kazi Nazrul Islam as the national poet of Bangladesh while the military dictatorship succeeding them in 1975 proclaimed him as an Islamic poet. In West Bengal, the Dalits praise Nazrul Islam for his anti-caste position while the BJP crown him as the apostle of secularism and the “rebel poet” of India where his work is used. These recurring tensions and the impact of state imaginations make his prolific itinerary suspect of nationalist appropriations, more so, because Nazrul Islam is an understudied figure that has been bypassed by historians of South Asia. This paper charts polemic interventions in the literary corpus of the contested anticolonial thinker of India and Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976).

His unique revolutionary vocabulary, Pan Bengal rhetoric and non-sectarian stance in his writings and speeches had sought to awaken the subaltern masses for purno swadhinata. I examine the binary nature of Indic and Islamic mythological allegories, historical and cultural imagery that animates his magnum opus to further discern Nazrul Islam’s political message. The larger objective of this paper aims to broaden our understanding of this understudied intellectual figure whose literary praxis is within the modern political tradition of Rabindranath Tagore, B.R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi.

SESSION C

PANEL 5 Diaspora and Identity

Patriarchal Oppression and Marginalized Women Revisited: Deepa Mehta's Diasporic Gaze in *Fire* and *Water*

Artemis Tzioli | Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

Indian diasporic films that challenge certain socio-cultural structures face strong opposition in India, yet over time these films do increase social awareness and inspire change. This has been the case with Indo-Canadian film director Deepa Mehta, whose films *Fire* (1996) and *Water* (2005) tackle controversial issues of marginalized, voiceless women—the former portraying female same-sex desire, and the latter exposing the destitute lives of ostracized widows. Both triggered significant negative reactions from local fundamentalist Hindu groups, who accused the director of debasing Hinduism and attacking Indian societal norms. I contend that Mehta's cinematographic approach and diasporic voice offer a ray of hope to the audience, revealing two banks of social change: they depict the dilemma of coercive social stratification, but they also confirm a definite acceleration of desire within modern Indian (local and diasporic) society to ignite social change. Through a close study of Mehta's key female characters, I propose to provide alternative readings to the dilemmas of such films that centrally challenge a traditionally patriarchal society through the subject matter of the subaltern woman, as well as explore the director's own liminal position as a diasporic voice.

Life in the Diaspora: Growing up Cosmopolitan in Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

Prabal Das Gupta | East Delta University, Bangladesh

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* is a tale about duty and desire, conflict and reconciliation in the lives of diaspora. The author delineates the unevenness in the diasporic life and shows how difficult it is for the community, in a cross-cultural ambience, to reconcile with the conflicting entities of their life. Divakaruni epitomizes the spices, appearing emblematic throughout the novel, as the treasure of India- "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination". The author depicts an altruistic character like Tilo, who struggles to harmonize herself with the shifting priority of her life. Her ambivalent soul sways between her egalitarian sense of duty and bodily desire for love. In the midst of turmoil, Tilo settles her mind to "acknowledge the suffering" of all, substantiating that "the smell of charred flesh is the same everywhere". Finally, the paper concludes showing how pertaining to "a double consciousness", the characters, negotiating with the nuances of their inheritance, grow up cosmopolitan that is "vernacular" in nature, allowing "the local, parochial, rooted, culturally specific" one to live together with the one -"transnational" and "transcendent".

PANEL 6 Shifting Images: Transforming Indian Identity and the Politics of Representation (organized by the South Asian Muslim Studies Association)

Moderator: Laura Jenkins, University of Cincinnati

Explaining the Relationships between Ideology, Identity, and Development for Indian Muslims in Post-Sachar India

Mujibur Rehman | Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India

Ever since the publication of the Sachar report (2006), the Muslim backwardness debate has triggered a shift in the discussion on Muslims- from identity related issues to development oriented issues. However, ever since the Modi government has come to power, a widespread perception has arisen that issues of Muslims are embroiled more in identity related questions in the face of very aggressively assertive Hindutva ideology causing regular friction between identity and development in India's public discourse. This paper will explore how the relationship between ideology (secular, hindutva, minority rights etc) is influenced in the context of identity and development. Given that Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas (solidarity with everyone, development for everyone) was the dominant

election slogan during the 2014 national election indicating that Modi-led BJP would put the Hindutva ideology in backburner. But the way politics has unfolded in the past few months with Ghar Wapsi, Love Jihad etc.; the hidden Hindutva agenda has now emerged as a major political agenda raising questions about development agenda in general.

Muslims and Christians and Ghar Wapsi: Converts, Reconverts, and Reservation Law

Laura Jenkins | University of Cincinnati, USA

Dalits (known administratively as “Scheduled Castes” or SCs) lose their eligibility for caste-based affirmative action if they convert to Islam or Christianity, a policy shored up by fears of mass conversions to these “foreign” religions. Originally only available to Hindu Scheduled Castes, quotas in government employment and higher education are now open to Sikh and Buddhist Scheduled Castes. Sikhs and Buddhists were successful in their efforts in part because these religions had been previously subsumed under Hinduism for other legal purposes; yet legally super-sizing Hinduism in this way denies the distinct religious and minority identities of Sikhs and Buddhists. Dalit Muslims and Christians face another difficult trade-off: Exercising one right, the right to convert, causes them to lose another, the right to access affirmative action programs. Scholarly studies and government reports, particularly the Sacchar Commission report, now acknowledge the impact of caste discrimination in Muslim and Christian communities in India, yet several cases before the Supreme Court challenging the denial of affirmative action to Dalit Muslims and Christians have dragged on for over a decade without resolution. In contrast, the Supreme Court in 2015 decided that Christians who “reconvert” to Hinduism are eligible for affirmative action if their forefathers were Scheduled Caste Hindus. Referring to the writings of Dr. Ambedkar and scholarship on Dalit Christians, the Supreme Court panel utilized these narratives in ways their authors never anticipated – to support a decision that incentivizes conversions to Hinduism while maintaining the penalty for conversions to Christianity or Islam.

Muslim South Asia at the Crossroads: Asghar Ali Engineer’s Writings on Liberation Theology in the Light of 20th-Century Islamic Discourses on Religious Authority

Fabian Falter | University of Bonn, Germany

For the Muslim communities of South Asia the 20th century has been – especially around the dissolution of British colonial India – one of extensive changes and challenges in the socio-political environment. It is in the field of socio-political turnovers, outside pressure to “modernize”, internal fragmentation into several movements and tendencies as well as extensive processes of negotiation that my paper is situated, concentrating on the intellectual and activist Asghar Ali Engineer (1939-2013). As he challenged the authorities of his own – the small but influential and tightly organized Daudi Bohra – community, he devoted part of his extensive writings to his idea of a liberation theology in Islam as a “powerful ideological weapon” of the oppressed and dispossessed adherents. The paper – based on my ongoing PhD-project and texts he wrote between the late 1980s and 2013 – aims at locating his writings within the Islamic discourses on religious authority and the role of Islam within the South Asian societies after independence by asking the following research questions: How did Engineer describe his visions of a Muslim and of the Indian society and where is it situated within postcolonial Muslim discourse? Was he able to affect the Muslim communities at the crossroads of traditionalist teachings, experiences of being oppressed, outside pressure, and internal fragmentation?

SESSION D

PANEL 7 Hand in Hand: The Future for Business and Government

India's Nuclear Identity: A Constructivist Explanation

Smita Singh | Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

From a nuclear abstainer to a bystander and finally as a 'de facto nuclear weapon state', India has put forth its case as a unique and exceptional nuclear power as opposed to Iran, Iraq and North Korea with similar nuclear ambitions, who have been snubbed as "rogue states" by the international community. This paper investigates the reasons behind international community's gradual acceptance of India's nuclear weapons capabilities and nuclear identity after the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal.

In this paper, the central concept of analysis is the inter-subjective nature of identity in the nuclear arena. India's sudden heightened global status is not solely the consequence of its 1998 nuclear tests but a calibrated projection as a responsible stakeholder in other spheres such as economic potential, market prospects, democratic credentials and so on. By examining India's nuclear discourse this paper contends that India has used its material and discursive power in presenting a striking image as a responsible nuclear weapon power (though not yet a legal nuclear weapon state as per the NPT). By historicising India's nuclear trajectory through an inter-subjective analysis of identities, this paper moves a step ahead in providing a theoretical interpretation of state actions and nuclear identity construction.

From Corporate Social Responsibility to Cultural Sustainability: Moving Towards the Future

Asmita Basu | Academy for Professional Excellence, Kolkata, India

Traditionally, CSR refers to businesses' responsibility to act ethically and consider their impacts on the community as a whole. CSR recognises the importance of environment, community and society in which a business operates and thus the issues related to maintenance and development should be focused. At present, in India, companies are funding different projects vital for social development in order to meet the CSR norms. It is very important in such a situation to highlight the areas which need special attention and are often overlooked. West Bengal has a deep rooted culture and rich heritage. It is a home to a number of tribal communities and folk cultures. In the midst of the urban development and speedy growth of technologies we need to sustain our culture, heritage and societal values particularly taking into account the rapidly changing parameters. The present paper aims to highlight some of the initiatives taken up by the Corporates towards development of a community and culture. The study will try to emphasize the areas which are potentially rich in culture and heritage and seek more attention in order to obtain cultural sustainability specifically in West Bengal and how management education can be an important source of new ideas about shifting towards an integrated rather than a fractured framework for sustainability.

India and South Asia: A Constructivist Perspective

Leslie Keerthi Kumar | Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, India

India has had a troubled relationship with most of its South Asian neighbours. Realist explanations focus on the strategic dynamics of the region to explain India's complicated relations with South Asian countries. However, Constructivism challenges realist assumptions about international politics and emphasizes on the critical role played by norms and ideas. In this context, it is important to reexamine the existing narratives about India and South Asia from a Constructivist perspective. By exploring the ideational assumptions driving India's relationship with South Asian countries, this paper will bring out what India has historically perceived as its role in South Asia. This paper will argue that this ideational understanding originated chiefly in the backdrop of partition and the cold war international climate. However, despite the end of Cold War and India's emergence in the last two decades as a great power, India's perception of its role in South Asia has not largely changed. This paper will argue that this has resulted in a limited foreign policy vision among India's policy elite towards South Asia who are still captive to an outdated construct. This paper will put forward a new ideational orientation for India towards South Asia that

is befitting its economic and political rise which can incrementally alter India's stunted ties with its South Asian neighbours.

PANEL 8 Ambedkar and His Influence

Religion as an Instrument of Emancipation: An Analysis of Ambedkar's Buddhism in India

Karamala Areesh Kumar | Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Religion has played an instrumental role in changing socio-cultural structure of the society across the globe. Religion continues to be a significant element influencing socio-cultural as well as the political aspects. Socio-cultural reformation has in many ways opted for an alternative faith as a tool of empowerment. For many, social reformation was to abandon religion and for others it was to create an alternative religion. Opting for alternative religion or faith has been a preference for many of the marginalised communities to counter discrimination and inequity.

This paper examines the dynamics of Buddhism, caste system and untouchability. Buddhism appears to be a socio-political movement while it is examined in the discourse of social reform movements in India. Buddhism has occupied a distinctive place thereby initiating a revival of rigid social structure. It also evaluates the crucial role played by Buddhism as a social revival movement. Buddhism offers freedom from all bondages and seeks liberation of human beings from any psychological and social conditionings, while caste system demands complete subordination to imposed social order thereby denying any choice for an individual to be free from that social order.

How Engaged is Dr B R Ambedkar's Legacy?

David Blundell | National Chengchi University, Taiwan

As Buddhism spread out of India across Asia, its message reached peoples in distant places in Southeast and East Asia countries. The story of Dr B R Ambedkar is about his adopting the Buddha dharma and making choices for promoting human rights in India. He made it his life's struggle to open the legal process for egalitarian conditions in India from the early 20th century.

Today, Dr Ambedkar's legacy prevails as a guidance and inspiration for new leadership based on social equality and civil justice. I will review the current situation of this ongoing movement in terms of his legacy and engaged Buddhism.

SESSION E

PANEL 9 The Location of Art and Culture in Currents of Stasis and Change

Panelists will examine how representations of, discourses about, and ideologies related to Indian patriotism, nationalism, and minority identities have shifted across time and space. Through an assessment of how discourses on religious, caste, ethnic, and social ideology are products of the politics of exclusion and representation in relation to the country's local and global image and the social concerns of its communities, the panel presenters will highlight what defines India, Indian citizenry, and Indian minorities.

Creating Community and Engaging New Viewership in Public Art Workshops in Odisha

Pradosh Mishra | Banaras Hindu University, India

Contesting Congested Byways: Contemporary Art and Issues of Urbanization

Kathryn Myers | University of Connecticut, USA

Emancipated Pedagogy and Practice: Needs and Concerns for Art Education in the 21st Century

Sharmila Sagara | Ahmedabad University, India

The Evolution of Tradition in the Revitalization of Cultural Heritage: New Challenges and Methodologies

Lina Vincent Sunish | Art Historian and Curator

PANEL 10 Points of Contact: South Asia and the World

Cultural Contact between the East Coast of India and China: A Study Based on Chinese Potteries

Durga Basu | Calcutta University, India

India had a commercial and cultural contact with China from time immemorial. Various Chinese sources and Greek geographer's accounts give us information regarding early contacts between these two countries. It is said that in the middle of the second century A.D. a brisk maritime commercial transaction had started between China and east coast of India, especially with the coastal areas of Bengal. In early and medieval time throughout Indian east coast in the states of Andhra and Orissa commercial transaction with China grew up rapidly. In these regions a number of archaeological sites, identified as port cities, have produced a variety of Chinese potteries which indicate the changing pattern of commercial transaction in the contemporary society. The commercial transactions were mainly based on importing Chinese potteries – an important aspect of Chinese civilization. This brought about a new dimension in the cultural life of the Indians. Some of these port cities on the east coast of India were mentioned by Periplus, Ptolemy and others. The archaeological evidences have shown that these ports were very active since early historic period. Interestingly, the Chinese sources are explicit about the maritime contact with China and Orissa in later period. The present paper will highlight the cultural contacts between China and the states of Orissa, Andhra and West Bengal.

When the Empire had to “Look East”: Trade Routes and Cross-Border Commerce in Colonial North-Eastern India, 1826-1914

Bikram Bora | Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

In 1907, *The Pioneer* newspaper reported about an “ancient, entirely disused, and almost forgotten road” from Assam to Sichuan in China, across the eastern Himalayas. Re-exploring this route, especially in the context of Assam's access to railways would be crucial in tapping the trade of prosperous Sichuan, the newspaper remarked.

This was not an isolated coverage. The persistent seeking of land routes towards the east is a recurring motif in the imperial political grammar of north-eastern British India. Via this “frontier”, the Empire increasingly came into contact with Chinese, Tibetan, Burmese and French territorial interests in Asia. Negotiations occurred in diverging registers: geo-spatial, political and commercial. The strategic location of the region and its gradual incorporation into global networks of labour and capital with the “discovery” of tea proliferated “possibilities” for cross-border trade.

This paper will attempt to investigate how these “possibilities” of trade and the search for trade routes had informed the discursive self-fashioning of the empire vis-a-vis its territorial interests and vice versa. Whether the framing of this particular “frontier” as a comprehensive geo-political entity was derivative of this self-fashioning? Long before the post-1947 regimes of India, did the empire also ‘look east’ in order to envisage and conceptualise itself?

Migrants and Mandals: Perspectives from Gujarati Travel Writers in Colonial Kenya, 1920-1964

Misha Mintz-Roth | Johns Hopkins University, USA

This presentation examines Gujarati travel writing from Nairobi, Kenya’s present-day capital, during the interwar and post-World War II period. In the twentieth century, following the expansion of steam travel and vernacular print production, Gujarati travelers wrote about newly settled regions of the diaspora. East Africa, for many, was a place of economic opportunity and mobility and the production of religious and community life. This presentation analyzes writers’ assessments of the latter—of the Mandals and other communal and confessional groups in Nairobi. Specifically, it makes the case for spiritual organizations’ centrality in twentieth-century migration history—for the capacity of temples and mosques to settle newly arrived populations, administering housing and welfare and managing networks of patronage on a trans-continental scale. In these writings, we hear about congregations’ efficiencies and influence. We also hear about the production of orthodoxies and rituals that served to stiffen the boundaries of belonging around race as well as confessional groups and caste. Gujarati travel writing, I argue, transmitted glimpses of community life abroad back to Gujarat, inciting further migration to East Africa over the coming decades, and contributed important discussion about caste, community, and secularism in post-colonial India.

The Trend of India-China Relations under the Modi Administration: A Chinese Perspective

Fang Tien-sze | National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

Since taking charge as Prime Minister in May 2014, Narendra Modi has invested time and energy in international engagements. To a certain extent, India’s image as a significant player in international affairs has improved. China has been keen in building closer ties with India under Modi’s governance. It seems that greater economic cooperation between India and China could help Modi achieve his economic goals at home. However, the bilateral relations are also driven by their own perception of security. On the global stage, India and China have cooperated on the BRICS, WTO and climate changes, but vied for international influence. Beijing has been apprehensive of the growing proximity between India and the US as it might lead to an alliance against China. On the regional level, the Modi government has launched the Act East policy to strengthen its presence in the region, while Beijing is working to expand its footprint in the Indian Ocean by the ambitious “One Belt One Road” initiative. In order to provide a fresh look at the complex relationship between the two rising powers, the paper aims to identify noticeable changes to relations between China and India with a focus from the Chinese perspective.

SESSION F

PANEL 11 Intersections with “The Other”

Hinglish and Negotiations of Identity in Contemporary Indian Literature and Film

Alan Johnson | Idaho State University, USA

Hinglish, the mixing of Hindi and English in India, is an oft-cited example of the effects of globalization on language. Although some form of Hinglish has existed since British rule, India's post-1991 liberalization accelerated its use, and it is now part of everyday speech in many cities. Some see it as a threat to the purity of Hindi; others believe it is pragmatic; and yet others argue that it actually drives meaning-making. I argue that these debates overlook a key reason for using Hinglish in Indian literature and film, which is to illustrate the conflicted nature of all language-use and thus highlight the contingency of all representation. This does not mean that such questioning inevitably corrupts a particular language. Instead, Indian novels and films use both Hinglish and local languages to safely negotiate markers of identity that in other realms are exploited for political gain. I consider F. M. Senapati's 1901 Oriya novel *Six Acres and a Third* and R. Rao's 1934 *Kanthapura*. The first is an ironic treatment of dominant vs. vernacular languages, the second, a rendering of oral culture in English. Both writers confront linguistic erosion by anglicized modernity, yet embrace linguistic pluralism, which I also illustrate with recent films and novels. I engage with scholars like Rajni Kothari, Rita Kothari, Harish Trivedi, and Bishnupriya Ghosh.

“Dying” to Be White: India's Obsession with White Skin

Purnima Bhatt | Hood College, USA

My paper examines India's growing obsession with white skin as evidenced by frequent public discourse and matrimonial and “beautification” advertisements in newspapers, and the visual media. Skin lightening products have become a multi million-dollar industry promoted by popular celebrities.

My paper examines ancient Indian texts from the Vedas to the Ramayana, Mahabharata as well as the Kamasutra and Gita Govinda to understand attitudes towards fair skin. I also discuss the impact of Afghan, Turkish and Persian invasions and Islamic conquest of India and the extent to which Colonialism and racism have been responsible for the prevailing ideas that equate fairness with beauty.

I employ a cross-cultural, comparative approach by looking at the cultural preferences for white skin in Ancient Egypt, as well as in China, Japan, Korea and South-East Asia. Was fair skin an indicator of social standing and high status in these societies?

The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the possible serious health concerns raised by the whitening creams and other treatments. It also explores the recent developments underscoring concerns with and opposition to this fixation with whiteness.

“With love, from Kabul”: How Afghans have Impacted the Cultural Landscape in South Delhi

Chayanika Saxena | Society for Policy Studies, New Delhi, India

Claiming that their friendship is civilizational, and even forays into mythology, India and Afghanistan reflect intense cross-cultural camaraderie. Having reached a high-point with the inauguration of Indian constructed Afghan National Assembly, the ties between them is multi-faceted. However, of the facets that have stood out the most is culture.

Right from Kabuliwala to Afghan Jalebi; Afghan restaurants to their fashion, Afghans have left their imprint on the syncretic Indian culture. Even architectural changes have been witnessed to accommodate the needs of many Afghans who flock India and make it their temporary abode.

Spread throughout India, it is however its national capital, New Delhi, which has become a second-home for thousands of Afghans, and who have in turn made their presence felt here in many conspicuous ways.

As I witness a slow transformation of Lajpat Nagar, which is a commercial and residential space in South Delhi allocated to Partition refugees, into what is being heartily called ‘mini Afghanistan’, in the proposed paper I will map the cultural imprints of Afghans on this small locality. The proposed paper will be a multi-domain analysis,

covering aspects including the penetration of Dari language (on hoardings, spoken by shop owners); mushrooming of Afghan bistros; on fashion; and architecture (in a space called Kasturba Niketan within Lajpat Nagar).

Imagining Pakistan: Narratives from Bollywood Cinema

Vaishali Raghuvanshi | South Asian University, New Delhi, India

Pakistan as a state has been a subject of debate for academicians, policy makers, journalist's and people at large. In this regard how the image of Pakistan is constructed through these diverse sections of the society emerges as interesting phenomena to be interrogated. However, the critical question that arises here is whether these distinct portrayals are bound together by a common thread of imagination and are interconnected through similar forms of ontology and epistemology. The present paper seeks to explore answers for this very question. One way of looking at this issue is to locate a common platform from where such diverse section of society are involved in an interactive communication and tied together through essence of shared belief and experiences. Popular culture with its ability to bring in an interface between culture and politics through performative communication, acts as one such sphere. Among several forms of this sphere cinema owing to its pervasive mass appeal is a dominant instrument that has a penetrating impact on thinking and imagination of the people. India's commercial cinema produced in Hindi by one of the world's largest film industry, Bollywood, can be regarded as a suitable case in this context. It has approximately 45 million viewers who watch these movies in theaters and its annual revenue is around 3 billion dollars.

PANEL 12 Minorities and Majorities

Bio-political Governmentality and the LGBT Mobilization: A Case Study of Aravanis in Tamil Nadu

Lakshmi Parvathy | Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India

Abstract not available.

The Role and Status of Women: The Matrilineal Society of the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya

Rebecca Soanes | North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India

Gender roles and relations are concepts which are important to understand the status as well as, the identity of any gender group in a society. The paper is a study on the role and status of women in the Khasi community at Mawkynrew village in Meghalaya. They are a matrilineal society where women perform different roles and contribute to the functioning of their society. Being a matrilineal society, hence, the women folk are the bearer and preserver of the lineage system. There are also certain aspects in their society which ascertains the position of women in the socio-cultural, the economy and the political roles and contributions of the women. The traditional system by how gender roles are being distributed will thus also be an important area of study to understand the gender relations that has been there for generations. The paper therefore aims at understanding the status of women in all these spheres of their life and the changes that have come about in relation to the roles they perform in their society.

Ethnic Minority Groups Residing in India and Taiwan

Kevin Hutt | National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Dinithi Wijesuriya | National Chengchi University, Taiwan

This research paper will be based on an anthropological study on a comparative analysis between the ethnic minorities of Taiwan and India. Throughout the globe, ethnic minority groups all face the common struggle to preserve their cultural identity in a society where they are not the majority. They often reside in nations where their history and culture is not often portrayed in the mainstream media and is sometimes not talked about at all. The focus of this paper will be on comparing and contrasting the common issues that ethnic minorities of India and Taiwan face in terms of societal integration, living standards, discrimination, ethnic tension and much more. This

paper will also include a qualitative research study to get authentic insight from the ethnic minorities of both nations. Through this comparative research, one can gain a better understanding of how to preserve the cultures, music, languages and traditions of ethnic minority groups throughout the globe.

PANEL 13 Learning from the Past

Colonial Codification of Education in India until 1920

Preeti | Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

This paper seeks to understand the nature of colonialism and the nuances of education provided by it through the lens of curricular knowledge in social and natural sciences and technical education till 1920. The British Indian education is conceived in India as an act of securing and consolidating power. By the introduction of the ‘complete system of education’, the British sidelined indigenous education which was marked by diversity. Certificates and exams became ‘a guarantee for high ability and valuable attainments’. The realignment of education brought consent to the British rule which the military power could not have achieved. The Indian subjects were informed that colonial education aimed at bringing ‘modernity’ among the natives. But in the garb of bringing ‘modernity’, it brought a culture of certificates, mark sheets and medals which became the prized possessions of ‘haves’. The major social function which colonial education fulfilled was to differentiate between the haves from the overwhelming majority of ‘have-nots’. However Indians were not meek spectators either. Several Indian intellectuals set up their own model schools. Active demands put up by the Indian leaders to have more technical colleges attest to Indian participation in education. Therefore, no simple model or statement can be devised to understand why colonial education had the kind of effects it had.

Reconstruction of the Age, Gender, Stature, and Way of Life of the Prehistoric Human Skeleton Displayed at the National Museum, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Katupelella Chandimal | University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

The detailed morphological and morphometrical analysis of the human skeleton (4000YBP C14) excavated from prehistoric site Potana Sigiriya presently displayed in National Museum Sri Lanka has not been done. Thus the objective of this study was to analyze morphology and morphometry of the prehistoric human skeleton to reconstruct the age, gender, stature and way of life the extinct individual. The available fragmented cranial bones showed the less prominent superciliary arch, medium sized mastoid process represented by its base and rounded with a point in the midline chin observed in restored mandible was comparable with the female sex. The available fragmented pelvic bone showed wide sciatic notch which was comparable with the female sex. Completely erupted left and right upper third molars and left and right lower third molars supported the age at death of skeleton ranged from 18 – 25 years. Estimated age at death of the skeleton was around 25–35 years of chronological age considering the tooth eruption and dental attrition. The reconstructed height of extinct human is 170cm. This is lower than reconstructed reported height of extinct Potana male individual 173.16cm. The study revealed that the subsistence pattern of Potana man as hunting, gathering and fishing which had been the way of life of other prehistoric populations that lived in Sri Lanka.

Communal Relations in East Pakistan, 1947-1965: A Historical Analysis in State and Civil Society

Azizul Islam Rasel | University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

The making of postcolonial states, particularly in South Asia, was a bloodstain process. Entangled with communal tensions millions of people became homeless and displaced. Millions were killed and thousands of women were raped and houses ransacked and burnt. The people of South Asia, especially those who witnessed the calamitous communal conflicts in the 1940s could hardly forget it. The post colonial nation states of South Asia, Pakistan and India, could not come out of the communal tension even long after of their emergence. The tension between two communities caused much spoils to the development of societies and nations of the adolescent states of South Asia.

In this research we examine the communal relation in Pakistan state, particularly in the eastern part of Pakistan, present day Bangladesh.

In our research we will try to seek the following questions: Our principal research question is that how was the communal relation in Pakistan state and what was the state attitude towards the communal question? We have also a set of sub-research questions which are closely linked to our main research question. These are: did the state try to curb the communal conflicts or did it try to overlook or conceal the problem? Or, was the communalism state-patronized? Did the communal question leave any influence on the unmaking of Pakistan?

SESSION G

PANEL 14 Tensions and Traditions

Asian and Asian-American Self-Conception in American Secondary Education

Irene Y. Chun | Phillips Exeter Academy, USA

The differences in educational values and self-conception between Asian and Asian-American groups across contexts reflecting differing degrees of Westernization have received surprisingly little discussion in the scholarly literature. In order to investigate critically the common academic misconception that the respective behaviors of the Asian and Asian-American populations towards educational practices and values derive from Confucianism, this study surveyed both Asian and Asian-American secondary school students about educational and moral values. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the survey clearly showed that private school students were less informed than public school students and, further, that the Vietnamese and Hong Kong students in all types of schools were better informed than their American counterparts. The students from the private education institution provided no direct answers when asked to contrast their own identity with other Asian identities. The significance of conducting such a survey was to represent that the general conception of private schools having highly advanced educational systems, which therefore produce better informed students suitable for future leadership roles in reform, is flawed with respect to questions of minority identification.

The Idea of India: Contestations and Paradoxes

Alex Tsakiridis | Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

The idea of India is an exploration first of all of our own conceptions about the country and its people. Seeking to challenge given ideas and critically analyze the history of the nationalist movement that brought freedom to the subcontinent, the paper presents the various arguments and the critiques of the nationalisms that emerged before, during and after the national struggle. We could even say that one type of nationalism still struggles today, not only to be accepted by the dominant discourses as legitimate but also for the margins that it strives to represent. The history of these liberating ideologies, cannot be understood with the western framework of knowledge and experience. Inspired by the age of enlightenment and the rise of nation states in Europe, the anticolonial nationalisms carry a paradox within themselves. Using the categories and concepts conceived in the West, they fight against a colonial apparatus that is exactly the embodiment of European nationalism and orientalism. This is the central problematic posed by nationalism in a colonial and a post-colonial state. Nevertheless, the movement, with all its sides, succeeded in carving out different ideas of the nation, still has an essential role to play in today's politics and resonate in people's mobilizations and imagination, nearly seventy years after the declaration of independence of India.

PANEL 15 Art, Artifacts, and Religion

The Story of Krishna in Bengal Terracotta Temples

Shreela Basu | Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India

The terracotta temples of Bengal have marked differences from the temple building activity of the rest of India in various aspects. Bengal possesses a rich cultural heritage of terracotta temples significant in its intricacy of sculpture and in variety of architectural styles. A large number of temples is not well preserved, many stands as a ruins, but there are still some instance in almost every village of West Bengal. Some of them are really notable in the field of Art History. The temple building activity of Bengal flourished specially in seventeenth century which continued till nineteenth century. Initially the patronage of the Malla ruler of Bishnupur was the most important factor, but there were other factors as well. The influence of the Chaitanya movement inspired many other ruler

and the local landlords, business man etc. to actively take part in this activity. The cult of Bhakti flourished in Bengal, especially in Gangetic and south-west part of Bengal which is known as Rarhbanga.

The biography of Lord Krishna is very popular in India. The Bhakti cult was inspired by the *Bhagavatapurana*, the story of Krishna. The artisans of terracotta temples were more or less illiterate but they follow the details of *Bhagavatapurana*, though aware of the oral tradition. The depiction of Krishna-katha is dominant in the temples. It shows the detailed story of Krishna starting from his birth. Some episode of his childhood and youth glorify his bravery. But the main emphasis is on the story of lover Krishna, madhurleela as per Bhakti cult. We would like to discuss the several variations of story of Krishna with proper photographs.

A Study of Cultural and Design Elements in the Queen's Stepwell of Patan

Shekhar Chatterjee | Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design and Manufacturing, Jabalpur, India

Ancient Indian monuments always represent the combination of cultural and design attributes. Architectural marvels of the Patan stepwell in Gujarat state in India were studied, to look into the cultural and design characteristics in them. The outer surfaces of the monuments were always decorated with intricate design to depict the cultural tradition of lifestyle. Direct observation, photography and image analysis, interviewing the art historians were the methodology adopted to find the clues to understand the implemented visual language to enhance the sculptures. The aim was to look for intimations into how culture and design affected architectural masterminds of the building some thousand years before when science and technology was not that developed.

The initial investigations showed that the artefacts are full of components of daily use, which reflects the concurrent evolution of rituals and style in that era and its growth in the subsequent periods. The ideal elements are seriously following all the artistic domain of Indian art and Indian philosophy. It represents a real panorama of life with all its weal and woes, transcending in a spiritual life of redemption through such magnificent sculptures on the panels and niche in the wall.

Cultural, Religious, and Spiritual Sanctity of Ganga and Self-purification

A.C. Shukla | Eastern Washington University, USA

The river Ganges—popularly known as Mother Ganga—is most written about and enchanted river close to hearts and life of people in India. What Volga is for Russians, Thames for British or Columbia for Northwest Americans, Ganga is much more for Indians. The river abounds in a vast milieu of interesting storylines, hear say, perceptions of people, faiths, beliefs and myths. Ganga is a living legend, a symbol of culture, religion, and Indian mythology. It is not only the lifeline of people but is believed to form a bridge between life and divinity and paves way for mortal human life and beyond leading ultimately to salvation. What is the X-factor – inimitable as it is sets the Ganga apart across other rivers, forms the theme of this presentation.

PANEL 16 Expanding Contact Zones

Border Haat: A Way Forward

Suparna Bhattacharjee | North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India

India shares more than five thousand kilometres of international border with neighbouring countries in North-East part of India. The proposed Paper is concerned with the understanding of the potential of border haat in engaging India's North-East with its neighbours within the framework of development. Border haat, implies a traditional informal weekly market. Transactions pertain primarily to buying and selling of perishable items. Recorded history shows that such form of haat existed along the foothills of erstwhile Himas (present-day Meghalaya), plain areas of Ahom kingdom (Assam), Tripura and Bengal (Bangladesh). The haats developed and flourished further during the British rule and emerged as important hubs of commercial activities. The partition of the sub-continent, the subsequent political turmoil in the region made it all the more difficult to revive this age old arrangement of informal trade. Four haats have been reopened from 2012-2014 under Indo-Bangla initiative.

Though haats offer limited trading facilities, they could prove to be a vital link to livelihood intervention in such areas which lie in periphery of border areas.

Given the context, the paper would seek to analyse how Haats may prove to be a valuable mechanism to boost India's Act East initiative by laying down the foundation for `people to people contact by creating a shared space of co-presence.

Early Indic Maritime Networks in Monsoon Asia, Spread of Dharma, and Austronesian Navigation

David Blundell | National Chengchi University, Taiwan

My purpose is to explore information on ocean transport networks of religions from ports of India and Sri Lanka across Monsoon Asia (Indian Ocean to South China Sea). Research components are based on geographic information systems (GIS) mapping and spatiotemporal documentation of Mariners (navigation), Merchants (trade), and Monks (*dharmā*) in terms of early historical destinations. It is to study the interplay of ancient cultural pursuits across the region.

My question is to what extent did international religious systems, such as beliefs in the *dharmā*, beginning about 2,300 years ago, spread into ocean island areas of Monsoon Asia facilitated by Austronesian navigation? This is to say there was a range of influence stemming from Southern Asia (e.g., India and Sri Lanka) across the Bay of Bengal to Island Southeast Asia. The region became receptive to the dharma in Sumatra, Java, and the Celebes, yet to what extent did the religious system go further east across the islands. Why didn't the dharma enter Micronesia? How could routes be traced? Was there a limit? And if so, why?



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UNDERSTANDING SOUTH ASIA'S CULTURES, HISTORIES, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SASA GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THOSE WHO HELPED MAKE THIS CONFERENCE POSSIBLE

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