



Institute of Social and Cultural Studies

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Annual Report

2020-2021



INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

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DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India shaped itself in 2011 as an autonomous body intending to conduct research and in-depth study with a combination of factual information and critical approach yet authoritative account in concise form.

Addressing diversities and transitions of areas stretching from Indian Ocean to Himalayas and Central Asia, covering India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka the Institute through its survey of history from ancient times to the present has been examining both the history and social changes that has shaped the region over time.

The year 2020-2021 remained challenging for the Institute as COVID-19 situations made things hard to predict, led circumstances change rapidly and also induced alteration in policy and working mechanisms. Though certain Chapters through hybrid mediums and digital platforms within ISCS umbrella continued to inform and represent inspiring lives of reformists, culture and social linkages but for a considerable period of time ISCS too like its contemporaries switched into virtual plenaries to identify the 3 R's i.e. Renaissance, Resilience, Redevelopment of Post COVID world and tried to foray on the impact of COVID on Indo-Pacific alliance, neighbourhood and democracy, judiciary, energy, security, tourism, tea and trade, sustainability of art and artistry etc.

The "Coeval Discourse" and designed series of disquisition on "Connect to Reconnect" in alliance with The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), GOI enabled the Institute to talk and converse with diplomats and eminent researchers from neighbouring countries on subsequent New Normal praxis of trade, economy and growth momentums of post pandemic era.



Institute's proposed range of publications and set of essays on topics like democratic proceedings, political internecine, issues of ethnic fissures composed during 2020-21 that are in the lines of release would paint a graphic of regional perspectives about south Asian history addressing the past, present and future challenges faced by the diverse and fascinating region altogether.

The Annual Report is an account of Institute's research programs, symposiums, cultural events and achievements. A draft of organizational Way Forward inputs are listed down by Institute's partners and associates towards conducting in-depth research, developing inclusive platforms to exchange narratives and most importantly building a strong base for carrying country's ideas and voices to global forums in future.

Arindam Mukherjee,
Director, ISCS, India



Introduction

The Chapter on Freedom Struggle Studies through its publications and events intends to capture the strength, ideas and spirits of the martyr's of Indian freedom movement. This year the given unit of study through digital mediums tried to portray the essence of social harmony and unity deliberated during national movements in colonial India. With an intention to rise the spirits of generation of today whose enthusiasm and integration are needed for the country to salvage through the crisis of pandemic. Institute through national and international talks and events also commemorated the contributions of the heroes of freedom movement like Master Da Surya Sen and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Where there conviction, power and self sacrificing commitment towards the nation was once again being resemble.

Report on the Webinar

Disease and Disaster: Growth of Early Nationalism in Colonial India

The Webinar titled Disease and Disaster: Growth of Early Nationalism in Colonial India, held on 20th June, 2020 started with an introductory note by Professor Gautam Biswas on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies where he introduced the speakers and requested the Chair of the webinar Mr. Vikram Sampath to initiate the session .

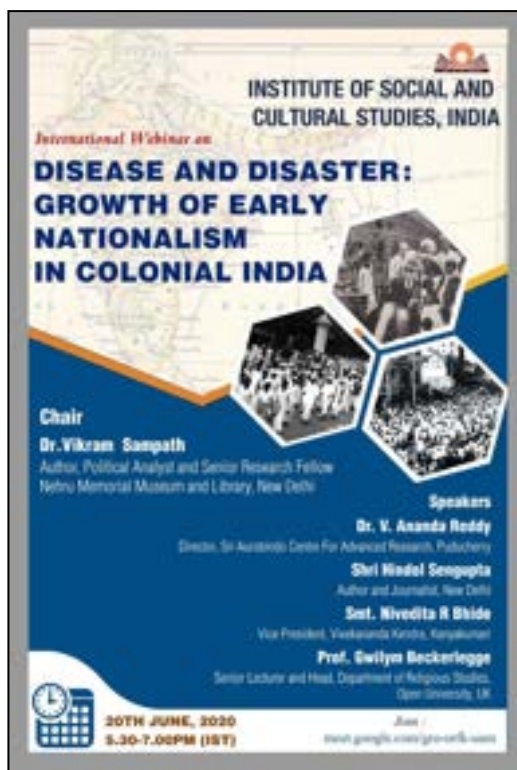
Mr. Sampath , Senior Research Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, in his introductory presentation pointed out the negative and the positive aspects of the disease and epidemic. Citing the example of the assassination of the Plague commissioner of Bombay by the Chapekar Brothers , arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak who vehemently criticized the ruthless plague epidemic prevention programme of the British Colonial Government, the chair opined that popular discontent that got generated during

the plague epidemic in India latter on provided the much needed thrust for the national liberation movement. He concluded by saying that disease and disasters had catalysed nationalism in India.

Dr. Ananda Reddy Director, Sri Aurobindo Centre For Advanced Research, Puducherry, in his presentation opined that Nationalism had an intrinsic relationship with disease. He thereafter discussed about Kshatriya nationalism and Ethical nationalism which according to him was rooted in the idea of Purna Swaraj and Satyagraha respectively. He concluded his deliberation by pointing out the necessity of emergence of a new of spiritual nationalism in independent India.

Sri Hindol Sengupta, Historian and eminent Journalist, initiated his deliberation by saying that during the period of epidemic outbreak and other medical emergency, it is necessary to look inward (self) rather than outward. By citing example like Sanyasi Rebellion, assassination of the British officials by the Chapeker brothers, the role of Ram Krishna Mission and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel during epidemic and disaster, he tried to prove the necessity of looking inward during the time of epidemic and other disasters. While explaining the Sanyasi rebellion he commented how during disasters collective efforts helped in understanding the deeper identity of the Indians. He ended his deliberation by commenting that epidemic, disease, disasters used to induce people to achieve its collective self-worth and a nation could successfully come out of epidemic and other form of crisis if it could achieve in attaining that collective self-worth.

Ms. Nivedita R Bhide, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, beautifully narrated the relationship of Disease, epidemic with the growth of nationalism in India. She said that the diseases and disasters became the cause for awakening and growth of Indian nationalism. Highlighting the role of Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita during the outbreak of Plague in Calcutta, she said that Swami Vivekananda's appeal in 'Plague Manifesto' was to give up fear. She concluded by saying that epidemic, disease and disasters challenged the inner strength of the human beings and inspirational characters like Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita through their works during such crisis inspired Indians to a great extent to achieve that inner strength.



After this meaningful presentation the speakers of the webinar answered important questions raised by the audience. Like the importance of building Self – Esteem during the period of Disease and Disasters, Importance of Spiritual nationalism in post independent India, Indian nationalism during the spread of Spanish Flu and the role of the Media, specially the nationalist media in this regard, Indian answers to

the concept of Well-being during epidemic specially during the present Covid- 19 pandemic.

After the speakers answered the questions a vote of thanks was delivered by SriKrisnenduBakshi on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Webinar on Armed Struggle against colonial rule from Battle of Jalalabad to the Liberation War of Bangladesh on the occasion of 125 years of Masterda Surya Sen

Though partition has made West Bengal and Bangladesh into two distinct orientations, yet the shared legacy of the two regions binds each other closely. Anti colonial struggle and more specifically revolutionary activities in colonial India is one of the sphere where both West Bengal and Bangladesh are closely connected with each other.

On the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary (1894-1934) of Masterda Surya Sen both halves of Bengal came together on 26th November, 2020 as Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India and Jagannath University, Dacca jointly hosted an international webinar titled "Armed Struggle against colonial rule from Battle of Jalalabad to the Liberation War of Bangladesh".

The stubborn resistance by the Indian revolutionaries against the colonial oppressors on the hills of Jalalabad in the year April 1930, immediately after historical Chattogram revolution influenced the subsequent Bengali generations. The battlespre, fighting spirit and velour exhibited by a handful of young revolutionaries again saw its manifestation during the Liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 when the Bengali's fought against the might of the Pakistani military.

The respectable speakers of the webinar which included Prof. Mohd. Salim, Dept of History, Jagannathh University, Dacca, Maleka Begum Eminent Writer, Prof., Central Women's University, Dacca, Mr. Abdul Mannan, Former Chairman, University Grant Commission, Bangladesh and Former Vice Chancellor, Chattogram University, Bangladesh and Selina Hussain, Eminent Novelist, Bangladesh from Bangladesh and Mr. Satyabrata Dey, S/O Biplabi Suresh Dey, Managing Director of Sreeleathers Ltd., India, Prof. Bimal Shankar Nanda, Associate Prof., Dept of Political Science, Charuchandra College,, Kolkata, India, Mr. Amal Sarkar, Chief of News Bureau and Senior Editor, EiSamaySangbadpatra, Kolkata, India and Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies from Kolkata. Prof. MizannurRahaman, Vice Chancellor of JagannathUniversity in their deleberations not only highlited the life and endeavours of



Masterda Surya Sen, they also analysed the revolutionary spirit of the Bengalis that inspired them to fight against injustice and oppression during various phases of history.

Report of International Webinar on 125 years of Masterda Surya Sen

The twentieth century revolutionary nationalists' selfless scarification to emancipate their motherland touched a chord amongst the ordinary mass of India that had grown steadily more restive under the British rule. Their heroic acts and activities had influenced the future generation of Bengal in their fight against oppression, suppression and injustice.

The heroic resistance of the revolutionaries against a well trained and well equipped British force motivated the Indian masses even in the subsequent period. During the Bangladesh Liberation war the Mukti Joddha Bahini drew their inspirations from this heroic activities of Surya Sen and his revolutionary associates.

To commemorate the 125th birth centenary of Surya Sen, the chief architect of the rebellion, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India organized a International Webinar along with Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminal of 1971 on 11 October 2020. The deliberations of the webinar centered round the armed anti-colonial struggle of Bengal from the Chittagong Movement till the Bangladesh liberation movement.

The webinar commenced with a speech of Shariar Kabir who educated the audience about the profound influence of Surya Sen and other Indian revolutionaries on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He emphasized the necessity to make people understand that the freedom struggle started by these revolutionaries ended in 1971 when under the leadership of Bangabandhu the Mukti Joddhas earned their independence from the West Pakistani tyrants.

The presidential address was followed by the presentation of a popular revolutionary song "muktiromondiroshopano tole" by Zannat – E – Ferdousi Lucky.

Thereafter a recorded speech of revolutionary Sudhindra Chandra Moitra, president, Baleswar Martyrdom Remembrance Committee was played. The octogenarian revolutionist spoke about the revolutionary endeavor of Surya Sen and other heroic activities of that period. He hoped that the present generation would take lesson from the activities of revolutionaries like Surya Sen who had selflessly engaged himself in the service of the nation.

The next speaker Mr. Satyabrata Dey, Managing director Sreeleathers Pvt Ltd, narrated the story of his father Suresh Dey, a prominent revolutionary and the close associate of Surya Sen.



The subsequent panelist Arindam Mukherjee, Director , Institute of Social and Cultural Studies in his deliberation presented various important aspects of Surya Sen's political journey . His narration specially highlighted the brutal assault sustained by Master Da a few hours before his death.

Like other distinguish speakers ,JusticeSamsuddin ChaudhuryManik, Advisor , Forum for Secular Bangladesh in his discourse discussed the profound influence of Surya Sen , Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay (BaghaJatin) and Subhas Chandra Bose in the life of Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and other Mukti Joddhas who fought against the Pakistani tyrants during the Bangladesh war of Independence in 1971.

Mr. Goutam Biswas, Assistant Professor , P.N. Das College , West Bengal, in his speech discussed the political life of Surya Sen and his relation with Subhas Chandra Bose.

Professor Mesbah Kamal, Historian , Central Committee member , forum for secular Bangladesh , in her presentation discussed the profound influence of Chittagong Armoury movement in the liberation movement of India. He analyzed in detail the relevance of the revolutionary outlook of Surya Sen in this present era.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury , General Secretary , Surya Sen Smriti Raksha Parishad, in his discourse narrated the prolong legal struggle to protect the symbols of revolutionary heritage associated with Surya Sen in Chittagong.

Ms. Aroma Dutta , social activist and member of parliament (Bangladesh) in her presentation discussed how Surya Sen and other revolutionary leaders had influenced her grandfather respected Dhirendranath Dutta, a Bengali politician and a crusader, to protect Bengali language.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks from Kaji Mukul, General Secretary, Forum for Secular Bangladesh.

Report on International Webinar on Secular Philosophy of Bangabandhu

Bangladesh and West Bengal are closely interconnected with each other through their rich shared legacy and the life and endeavour of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are important parts of that shared legacy.

Popularly known as Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had a strong connection with Kolkata since his student life. He studied at Islamia College (presently Moulana Azad College) and stayed at Bekar Hostel during his student days .

Commemorating the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh MujibarRahaman, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India and SampritiBangladesh ,jointly organized an international webinar titled Secular Philosophy of Bangabandhu on 8th November, 2020.

Moderated by Sri Pijush Bandyopadhyay, Convenor, Sampriti Bangla, eminent journalist Mr.AbdulGaffar Chaudhury, Literalist, Dr.AtiurRahaman, Bangabandhu Chair Prof., Dacca University and Major General (retd) Mohammad Ali Sikdar, Political and Security Analyst represented Bangladesh as speakers of this web based disquisition. From India, distinguished panelist comprising of Dr. Rabi Ranjan Chattopadhyay,

MLA and Ex. Minister, Govt of West Bengal, Mr. Samir Kumar Mitra, Ex-DIG, Border Security Force and Prof Raja Gopal Dhar Chakraborty, HOD, South and South-East Asia, University of Calcutta joined in this online symposium.

The Welcome address was given by Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and Prof. Dr. Mamun Al MahatabSapnil ofSampriti Bangladesh.

All the speakers from both the countries discussed in detail the role played and sacrifice made by Bangabandhu in creating secular Bangladesh.

Several speakers in their discourses while highlighting the growing danger of extremism in Bangladesh stated about the path and rules that were to be followed by Bangladesh in maintaining proper political climate, secularism and showing respect to all religions. The speakers in their deliberations also acknowledged the close cooperation between India and Bangladesh since the Bangladeshi Liberation movement of 1971.



Title “Revisiting the Legacy of Netaji Subhas in 21st Century”

The Chapters of History in several occasions even today continues to regard and reiterate– Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as one of those rare leaders of India's struggle whose thoughts and endeavours had earned a distinctive place in the national liberation discourse of India.

In order to commemorate 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose also to reminiscence and inspire generations with aspirations of the nation's great leader, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, National Library Kolkata, Netaji Subhash-INA Trust, and The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India Collaboratively organized an International conference on the Birth Anniversary of Netaji on 23rd January, 2021- titled “Revisiting the Legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the 21st Century” at the historical Belvedere House, National Library, Kolkata.

The inaugural session witnessed the presence of Shri Raghvendra Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India who commenced the International conference with his deliberation highlighting how the charismatic leader with strong determination tried to accomplish his endeavour to emancipate the nation from British rule.

The welcome speech was followed by the Keynote address delivered by Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) who wonderfully narrated the political life of Netaji back in times where he was elected as the president



of Indian national Congress for two consecutive terms. Air Marshal Raha ended his deliberation by stating that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose believed in discipline, regulation of power and managerial capacities which till date manifests especially

when nations national security faces a plethora of challenges in form of fragile borders and non-traditional security threats. In the contemporary situations of pandemic it is necessary for the country to draw inspiration from Netaji's uncompromising endeavour to combat such emerging challenges, much efficiently.

Dr.Purabi Roy, former professor, Department of International Relation, Jadavpur University commenced her discourse by analyzing the term Parakram Divas which the government of India declared on the occasion of Netaji's Birth Day every year on 23rd January. She focused her discussion on the evolution of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in various stages of life where Netaji transformed from a Neo-Vivekananda Spirituality to a radical patriot and finally to a soldier. The final part of her discussion cantered round the endeavours of the Indian National Army where her ideas featured the supreme sacrifice of the soldiers after they were captured by the British imperial army.

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Hon'ble minister of culture and tourism, government of India in his address discussed about Netaji's relation with his native town of Jabalpur where the leader had not only spent his imprisonment days in the central jail in 1932 but in 1939 received support towards his nomination, enabling him to contest for the presidency of Indian National Congress for second consecutive term. In the course of his discussion he applauded Netaji's uncompromising spirit to fight for the cause of the Nation. He ended his speech by thanking the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi for announcing 23rd January as Parakram Divas as a mark of respect for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The first academic session titled "Subhas and India's Freedom Struggle" commenced with the introductory address of the chair Professor Nirban Basu, Mahatma Gandhi Chair Professor, Department of History, University of Calcutta.

Dr. N. Lokendra Singh Department of History, Manipur University focused on the role of INA-Japanese Forces and Local Participation during the Imphal-Kohima campaign between 1943- 45. The distinguished speaker in his discourse highlighted the activities of three important ethnic communities of Manipur namely the Meities, Kukis and the Thangkul Nagas who assisted the Indian National Army in their effort to achieve national liberation. He stated that Manipur contributions in the national liberation movement still remained unexplored and urged the historians to initiate their academic inquisition in this regard.

Md. Ashraful Islam, Founder chairman, International Centre for Netaji Subhas Ideology (ICNSI) & Editor in

Chief Bahumatrik.com. in his discourse analyzed the outstanding leadership quality of Subhas Chandra Bose and the significance of the speeches stirred about the emotions among the Indian soldiers of the British imperial army who were captured as the prisoners of war in South East Asia. At the end he presented how the uncompromising struggle of Netaji had profound influence over the leaders and masses of Bangladesh who drew inspiration from his uncompromising efforts to resist the tyranny of the west Pakistani leadership.

Dr.KhinZaw from International Medical School (IMS) of Management and Science University (MSU), Shah Alam, Malaysia in his deliberation divided Netaji's association with Myanmar into two distinct periods, first of which started after Netaji was sentenced imprisonment for his anti- British activities and remained in various jails of Myanmar,while the second explicated Netaji as the supreme leader of Indian National Army during his course of visit at Myanmar. Quoting from the letters written by Netaji from various jails in Myanmar he transpired how Netaji suffered during his imprisonment days in the various jails of Myanmar, and concluded resonating Netaji's association with Myanmar during the Second World War when the Indian National Army marched through the soil of Myanmar towards India.

Prof. Kapil Kumar, former Director, Centre for Freedom Struggle and Diaspora Studies and former chairman of History faculty, IGNOU commenced his discourse by accusing the British of suppressing and crushing the legacy and contribution of Netaji and regretted that several successive governments of independent India had followed the path shown by the British. He also opined that there were numerous archival documents available in public domain which showed that it was the determined efforts of Netaji which forced the British to leave India. He ended his discussion by calling Netaji a visionary who became the first Indian leader to constitute a women regiment in INA and urged that his legacy must be promulgated to the youth of India so that they could learn about his ideology and practice in reality.

The chair of the session professor NirbanBasu thereafter summed up the session by analyzing the deep influence of C.R.Das, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose had on Netaji and briefly pointed out his activities in field of student politics, labour politics, provincial politics and municipal politics.

The second session titled “Netaji Overseas and the Saga of INA and its supreme Leaders” commenced after the chair Major General (Retd.) G.D Bakshi in his brief and passionate introductory note justified the government of India's decision to declare 23rd January as the Parakram Divas in honour of Netaji. He also acknowledged the highest valour exhibited by the sepoys of the Indian National Army which sacrificed almost 26,000 lives that constituted 44 per cent of the entire INA strength.

Prof. JyoceLebra, former faculty, Department of History, University of Colorado in her brief presentation reminisced the indomitable bravery of Iwaichi Fujiwara, Mohan Singh, Laxmi Sehgal and Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon. Her presentation featured the famous submarine journey of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as an example of his exemplary abilities of uniting world powers like Japan-Germany despite their innate mutual suspicions. Towards the concluding note she mentioned about the women regiment and their activities at the INA those days.



Major (Retd.) Ishwar Lal Singh Bhatti, a close associate of two revolutionary icons of India namely Rashbihari Bose and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in his short deliberation shared with the audience his memories with Rash Bihari Bose.

Prof. Dr. Do Thu Ha, Dept. of Indian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, USSH, VNU in her presentation meaningfully analyzed the rationality behind Netaji's endeavour to secure foreign political and military help to emancipate India from the centuries old British dominance. While discussing the philosophy and ideology of Subhash Chandra Bose professor Hua pointed out the role of hindutva and cultural nationalism in shaping Bose's revolutionary endeavours by specially mentioning

how Netaji drew inspiration from Vedanta, Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and teachings and writings of Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. In the final part of her deliberation she compared the revolutionary icon of Vietnam Phan Bhoi Chau and Subhas Chandra Bose and the rationality behind their decision to ally with Japan to gather foreign political and military assistance to achieve their national liberations.

Major General (Retd.) P K Chakravorty, Indian Army, Former Indian Defence Attaché to Vietnam highlighted the effort undertaken by Netaji to pursue the Japanese government to include India in their plan of action and secure military help from the imperial government of Japan. He acknowledged the fact that though Bose was not a trained soldier, history would remember him as one of the greatest military general and strategists ever.

The chair of the session Major General (Retd.) G.D Bakshi summed up the session by acknowledging Bose as one of the greatest military leaders of all time despite not having any formal military training. He said that Independent India must thank Subhas Chandra Bose and his martyrs of INA without whose efforts it would had been hard to uproot British rule from the soils of India.

The third session titled "Philosophy of Subhas" initiated with the brief introductory note of the chair of the session professor Radharaman Chakraborty, Former Vice Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University where he stated that the philosophy of Subhas grew out of his direct interaction with reality. He added that Subhas' philosophical urge directly came from a specific motivation.

Shri J.B. Prashant More, eminent historian and author focused on the political activities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Indo-China and especially in Saigon. He vividly discussed the activities of the Indian settlers in Indo- China and their participation in the movement initiated by Netaji on behalf of the Indian Independence League and the Indian Independence Army. His deliberation mentioned a French Indian named Leon Puduchandy, referred as an associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and happened to be

the last man to take over the leadership of Indian Independence League after the Japanese surrendered to the allies.

Dr. Abhijit Choudhury, Former Professor, Department of History, Edmund College, Shillong, Meghalaya in his discourse discussed the evolution of Subhas' philosophy of life, his ideas on Nationalism and Culture predominantly.. He pointed out the presence of Netaji in the north-eastern region of India during the INA'S military struggle against the British Army and the profound influence he had over the people of Nagaland and Manipur region, which the denizens still recalled.

Dr. Mohammad Salim, Dept. of History, Jagannath University, Dhaka discussed various philosophical aspects of Netaji like view on Nationalism, Socialism and in-depth Spiritualism. He discussed how the uncompromising struggle and philosophy of Netaji even years later influenced and motivated the people of Bangladesh to initiate their struggle to overthrow the oppressive West Pakistani leadership and emerge as a free nation and a pillar of New Independent Bangladesh.

The International conference in itself served as an enriching platform for all its participants. The presence of The Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal Sri. Jagdeep Dhankar, eminent Dignitaries and especially The Prime Minister Sri. Narendra Modi himself paid tribute to the National hero. Thereafter interacted with Distinguished Speakers and participants reckoning how invincible faith and deep love and self-sacrifice of the Leader for his motherland had stimulated strength, action and spirit of nationalism even in the remotest corner. The vibes of which even today continues to ignite a feeling of conviction of protecting motherland among our youths and generations widely.





Hybrid Seminar on Impact of COVID-19 on Indo-Bangladesh Trade over West Bengal

19 on Indo-Bangladesh Trade over West Bengal

Digital Platform- Googlemeet

Venue-Library Hall, RTC, ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations), Kolkata

Date-25th March 2021, Time-11am-1.30pm(IST)

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as an autonomous organization has been addressing issues pertaining to trade, connectivity, development trends with multi-sectoral audiences over discourses and conferences in collaboration with the ministry, academic institutions and private forums. Following its imperatives The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India had with support of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd organised a Hybrid Seminar on “Impact of COVID -19 on Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade in West Bengal” the seminar was addressed by the eminent national and International researchers, journalists, legal economists and private organization associates.

Participants of the Hybrid Seminar includes:

- Sri.Arindam Mukherjee- Director, ISCS, India
- Arup Kumar Saha- Head, The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Branch Secretariat office, Kolkata

- Dr.Raja Gopal Dhar Chakrabarti- Prof and HOD of South and South East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta
- Soumya Chattopadhyay - Senior Programs Officer, Indian Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank, New Delhi, India
- M. S. Siddiqui- Legal Economist, Former Professor : Daffodil Int'l University, Bangladesh, Senior Adviser : PrimaDollar Operations Ltd, UK, CEO : Bangla Chemical
- Dr.Sabyasachi Saha- Associate Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi
- Dr.Nazneen Ahmed- Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Dhaka
- Sri.Pratim Ranjan Bose- Researcher and Columnist

The Hybrid Seminar was marked with the Inaugural ceremony followed with a welcome address by Sri. Arindam Mukherjee, Director ISCS, India who underlined the fact that impact of COVID-19 on the cargo trade had taken a lot of toll. Thus the hybrid seminar is very time appropriate to actually devise strategies to streamline the trading amongst the two very largest partners of South East Asia. As cross border trading generates employment supporting livelihood of the dwellers around the border areas. The thrash of pandemic has caused migrations, unemployment threatening the survival of many in the border regions and associated with trade practices in multiple capacities. Cross border trade is not only better for the economy but also fosters the relations between the adjoining countries. Sri Arup Kumar Saha as part of his deliberation highlighted that the seminar is significant and very timely initiative as the Prime Minister of India Sri. Narendra Modi shall commence his Bangladesh tour laying a hope for more prospective multi-corporational relations between India-Bangladesh in coming times- as government is paying a lot of priorities on Indo-Bangladesh relations as well as cross border trading's. Sri. Saha depicted how the impact of pandemic has been devastating, rolling out statistics and figures he denoted that the trade graph during April-May-June 2020 has been trepidating. Although factors like prompt actions, right policy approach and visionary leaderships have been able to mend the trading trends at the petrapole over last few months. Thus in future to make Indo-Bangladesh Trading more beneficial



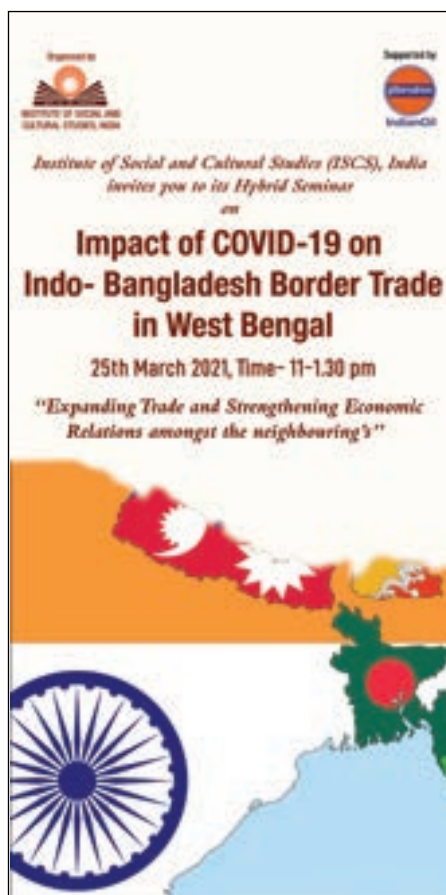
more importance should be given on factors like transport connectivity, BBIN Motor Vehicle agreements, Passenger and cargo protocols, Emphasis should be laid on enhancing connectivity between countries like India-Bangladesh-Nepal and Bhutan, also India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral connectivity, corridors of engagements among the Bangladesh and North east should be made wide open. Also rail and riverine connectivity should accord importance to substantiate trade and economic upliftments among the neighbourings. The Seminar and its sessions rested its propositions on issues compounding to “COVID-19 its feigning’s on Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade over West Bengal” and “Scooping Policies and Plotting Approaches for New Normal Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade”.

Dr.Raja Gopal Dhar Chakrabarti approached the topic underlyning the importance of the issue in present day – he said that pandemic had a harmful impact on development and trade economics but at the same time has unfurled new approaches, diverse corridors of engagements and opportunities. He added that with time as the things are ushering back to normalcy- right policies are to be adopted to ensure ascending growth and developments in trade and commerce between India-Bangladesh trade. Sri Soumya Chattopadhyay added as that this event is extremely relevant just before the PM’s visit to Bangladesh. India exports around 8.2 percent million goods to Bangladesh while Bangladesh exports roughly around 1.2 million altogether. 70 % of goods that are exported from Bangladesh to India are either by roads or rails, while India uses coastal shipping to transport their goods to Bangladesh. Therefore firstly it is important to map the routes passing through West Bengal, to enhance trade facility among both the countries. Secondly subsequent importance should be given to North Bengal Transit Trade routes especially to foster economic relations, socio-economic upliftments and political harmony among Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh more pronouncedly. Integrated Check posts of North Bengal should be improved, Infrastructural policy over Act East should be made better. Along with constant studies and improvement based policy approach a lot of importance should be extended on logistical and administrative issues.

A veteran and experience legal economists M. S. Siddiqui depicted that certain martinet legal restrictions, Indian Export regulatory trends, custom rules many a times clogs the smooth trading practices amongst the neighbourings. Thus it’s important to discuss and redefine policies and clauses of Bi-Lateral trade agreements. In times like pandemic or emergencies restrictions and custom regulatory practices should be eased out. During summit and meets countries should set rules to be adopted in exceptional and unprecedented situations to reduce sufferings of people associated and dependent on trade, also ensure expedite mechanisms towards export and import of essentials like medicines without much regulatory and legal barriers. Dr.Sabyasachi Saha acknowledging the views and perspectives of other speakers elucidated that trade policies should be given a lot of importance to liberalize and modernize economy and opening scopes for convergence and connectivity. According to Dr.Saha initiatives like Atma Nirbhar Bharat in itself is a model for trade optimism – as it renders a huge scope for export and reach of indigenous products in the global market. In order to optimize trade as per Dr.Saha factors like improving

transport services, enhancing role of technologies, developing convergence between regional and local institutions ,land enrooting's should be given utmost priority.

Dr.NazneenAhmed who accepted the trade cooperation approaches defined and suggested by others – but stressed a lot of importance of women empowerment and entrepreneurship programmes, As Dr. Ahmed has conducted studies to secure ideas that a lot of women often pays visit to India for procuring goods or even selling products of their nations. According to Dr. Ahmed Pandemic had shackled the travel and movement of many entrepreneurs and traders thus technological development, improved E-commerce should be prioritize in future also a comprehensive template should be adopted by countries to ensure high percentage of beneficiary's over CEPA for both the countries. Sri Pratim Ranjan Bose featured the refurbishments of domestic rules, infrastructural developments, enhanced connectivity facilities and far more logical set of rules pertaining to work permit, as trade initiates migration, settlement and employment opportunities. Thus asccording to him along with rail, road enroutings, and maintenance of Check Posts a vital importance should be agog to its trade associated factors. The hybrid seminar brought up certain very interesting issues and factors discussed as a part of presentations also later over lively discussions by enthusiastic and wide audience who were present to witness the interesting seminar in person also virtually.





Report of the 1st International Webinar on -“Livelihood and Disasters: Post Amphan Transboundary Sundarbans”

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies organized Webinar on -“Livelihood and Disasters: Post Amphan Transboundary Sundarbans” held on - 5th June 2020 started with a welcome address by Sri. HeerakNandy, Senior Associate, ISCS who introduced all the speakers and the Chair to the participants of the Webinar.

The Chair Dr..Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, President – Society for Environment and Development divulged the relationship between livelihoods and natural disasters in an area Sundarban which needed to be assessed through a multi-level analysis. Especially In the case of the residents in the Sundarbans and adjoining areas, as the forests were first felled by the East India Company during the 1780s to bring out land for revenue villages.. That started the process of occupation of the land and search for livelihoods. Availability of good soil and water facilitated the growth of population. The recent cyclone Amphan and the global forecast of more intense cyclonic events had posed a serious question on the sustainability of the routine ways of seeking livelihoods in a settled farming scenario. This was equally applicable to the Sundarbans both in Bangladesh and India.

Dr.Farid Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director Arannayk Foundation counted the threats that these cyclones added to the adjoining India –Bangladesh risking the livelihood practices of the residents who were dependent largely on agriculture. He rested on synthesizing pragmatics and efficient management skills to resist the effect of these cyclones on the people of the region. Most importantly his deliberation noted the fact that how these climatic calamities reflected the unity among the neighbouring's who in

the time of crisis desperately extended out support for each other.

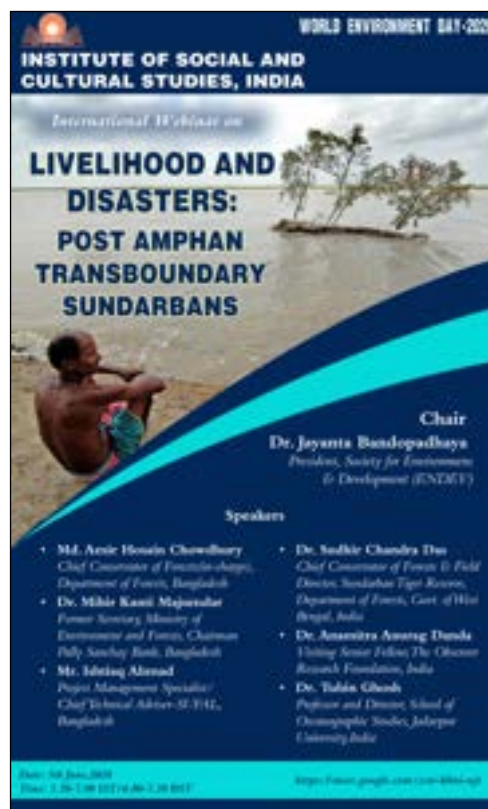
Dr.SudhirChnadra Das ,Chief Conservator of Forests and field Director, Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, Department of Forests, Government of West Bengal India and an area expert of Sundarbans identified that climatic disasters, cyclonic storms as some of the common phenomena of the region, but Amphan he said had laid a miserable impact on certain part of Sundarban reserve forests and to 4000 people of that particular region who were solely dependent on honey collection and various aspects related to agriculture. As the tides of winds had lashed infrastructure, roofs of the houses of the residents and agricultural infrastructure to a large extent he meted his concern about the fact that as at this point of time when people were bearing the distressful impact of COVID a parallel natural disasters like Amphan had thrown a bigger challenge of the ecology and sustainability.

Dr.MihirKanti Majumdar, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Chairman Pally Sanchay Bank , Bangladesh on a similar note described about the economic losses that Bangladesh had to bear post Amphan as it had wiped out the crops hence according to him the existing situation would have a gruelling impact on the nation's economy in coming times. He added that administration had to take a proactive step to ensure the ransacked region, economy and sustainability of people were back on track at the earliest.

Dr.Tuhin Ghosh, Professor and Director, School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University over his statistical analysis and figures tried to skim the economic gridlocks that India and especially the State had to confront post Amphan disaster.

Mr.IshtiaqAhmad, Project Management Specialist/ Chief Technical Adviser-SUFAL, Bangladesh who had been a project Management specialists enlisted numerous proactive steps and measures that the government would undertake to stall the hazardous impact of these storms in the region of Sundarbans and its adjoining , he emphasised on imparting various training programs among the localities of the region to prevent them and their agricultural land beforehand. He highlighted that the authorities who were vested with power would address that the lacuna was meted between the policies and practicing mechanisms.

Dr.Anamitra Anurag Danda, Visiting Senior Fellow, The Observer Research Foundation who narrated the historic perspectives of land Sundarbans further describing threats and need of initiating prudent management steps likewise other speakers and added that it was ironic that one of the most bio-Diverse zone of the state was the most vulnerable to climate



disaster. The recent devastation and the evident impact of climate change meant the people, flora and fauna of the Sundarbans needed to be cared and protected like never before.

While summarizing the session the Chair of the Webinar stressed upon the fact that ,since there was no hope of situation to arrest of global warming, and environmental hazards the cyclones were expected to become more intense. This also opened the option of informed and voluntary relocation of people in the very vulnerable areas, needed for sensitization among people regarding climate change and an alarming global warming. This also was opening up of opportunity for proactively activating the MoA of 2011, for sustainable collaboration between India –Bangladesh on Sundarbans to battle against the onslaughts of climatic change and fostering the ecology and habitability of the mangrove.

The enriching hosted Webinar concluded with a vote of thanks by Sri Krishnendu Bakshi, (Program Co-ordinator , ISCS) .

International Webinar on “India –Nepal in Present Times”

Institute of Social and Cultural studies (ISCS), India that had been addressing contemporary issues and development ideas over publications and diversified activities and events, in the view of given situation had hosted an International Webinar on “India-Nepal in Present Times” with eminent speakers of neighbouring India-Nepal on 10th of June 2020.

The event kicked off with a welcome address by an ISCS project consultant and further the Chair of the Webinar Mr. Ranjit Rae, who shared a sketch of the present situation with the participants of the Webinar. He reviewed the world crisis due to outbreak of COVID-19 through statistical facts and figures along with intractable political issues and geo-political disputes over SAARC region that are posing a threat on international relations at the moment. . Prof Rajesh Kharat illustrated that how India-Nepal relations has been challenged in recent times. Over his deliberation Prof. Kharat highlighted some of the previous beneficial bilateral relations that the countries have shared but despite of all that why suddenly all the tensions have emerged between the nations who fondly consider as brothers. He further added that in order to resolve the tension the countries have to address some unresolved previous issues , without an ill feeling towards each other. Secondly measures are to be defined to empower the border communities that includes



citizen of both the nation and the diasporas through eco-tourism and religious tourism. Taking the thread forward Prof Achyut Wagle from Nepal addressed the Webinar narrating Nepal and India enjoy deeply shared ties since time immemorial in every possible facet of their national lives; be that civilization, culture, economy, open border, nuptial exchanges, river systems and so on. Nepal throughout its 252-year long modern history was never colonized and remained a single sovereign country in the entire South Asia when the rest of the subcontinent was colonized. This has shaped country's pride, culture and people's behavior to a great extent. The bilateral relations in modern history were established in 1950 through a friendship treaty following India's independence from British colonialism. The two countries enjoy three parallel streams of relations; namely at government-to-government, business-to-business and people-to-people. Interestingly, the nature of relations at G-to-G level, which may face hiccups at times, barely seem to have impacting on other two levels of interactions and exchanges even during uneasy times. An unresolved Limpiyadhura, -Lipulekh, -Kalapani border issue between Nepal and India has once again taken a center stage and the bilateral relations, at least at the official levels, face momentary hiatus. At times, misrepresentation, misunderstandings and misdemeanors may cause such hiatus even in best of diplomatic relations. But they only warrant a continuous and meaningful engagement by both sides to resolve them, sooner the better, as for the countries like Nepal and India bound by similar fate and geography have no alternative to maintain best possible friendly relations in the interest of their countries and people. Mr .Nihar Nayak from Indian side outlined that since last 20-25 days the Nepal-India relations have become dire in public eye. He classified 10 main features between Nepal-India relations like open border phenomena, political system, democratic features, political asymmetry, external power and their takes, long lasted monarchy system, landlords vs tragedy, emotions and sensitivity and unresolved bilateral relations. . His deliberation also smacked the possibilities of Chinese intrusion in the given situation and thus his views hemmed on the fact that as a way forward measure both nations should start the dialogue on a foreign secretarial level and try and maintain amicable relation in future. .Bishnu Rijal who has been a last speaker clearly defined that India has to change certain perceptions first the nation has to be vocal with Nepal in resolving territorial issues along fighting with COVID-19 .As it has been doing with other countries over virtual G-20 summit and SAARC summit. Secondly the country has to respect and recall the contributions of Nepal towards India during Kargil times and several other times of crisis. India's ignorance towards Nepal and embedded ideology that Nepal has been a recipient due to India has to be evolved , rather countries now need to sit across table and retrospect about long pending issues and sketch a sustainable development road maps over tourism and enrichment campaign. Also discarding idea of China involvement in current dispute. As per his takes if countries continuation of disputes over geo-political reasons will accord countries like China and others to take advantage of given situation.

An insightful Webinar signed off itself with all the speakers and the Chair holding on to the same tune and urging the countries to immediately start a dialogue at foreign secretarial level to resolve the existing conflict. Secondly focus on financial arrangements, display and weave strategies to promote economic opportunities for border communities, focus on commonalities and try to build a mutual , sensitive relations between countries that had been each others development partner for 330 yrs or more.

International Webinar on – India Australia Alliance over Indo-Pacific

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India as an autonomous organization had been addressing various socio-Cultural perspectives, historical intricacies and development ideas over discussions, national and International events and vista of publication. In order to address various angles of bilateral relations and comprehensive strategic partnership that both India-Australia stepped over MoU's and agreements in month of June 2020- organized a Webinar on "India Australia Alliance over Indo-Pacific" on -3rd July 2020.

After the introduction by ISCS, the Chair of the Webinar Prof. Raja Gopal Dhar Chakraborti, Prof and HoD, Department of South and South-East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta highlighted India and Australia were in different stages of economic development played a very important role in fostering world peace. The India Economic Strategy, released in 2018 clearly recognized the Indian importance to Australia. India was Australia's fifth largest trade partner, with trade in goods and services worth A\$29 billion, representing 3.6 percent of the total Australian trade in 2017-18. Australia's exports to India were valued at A\$8 billion and imports at A\$21 billion. There were already more than 100,000 Indian students who were studying in Australia, more than two-thirds of whom are pursuing higher education. The Australian foreign policy as released in November 2017 saw India in the front rank of Australia's international partnerships: "Beyond an increasingly important economic relationship, our security interests are congruent, particularly in relation to the stability and openness of the Indian Ocean. Both the countries have common interests in upholding international law, especially in relation to freedom of navigation and maritime security." India's strategic engagement with East Asia and the United States was strongly supported by Australia. On 4 June 2020, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, participated in the Australia-India Leaders' Virtual Summit. At this meeting, the two Prime Ministers elevated the bilateral Strategic Partnership concluded in 2009 to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). The CSP was based on mutual understanding, trust, common interests and the shared values of democracy and rule of law. Through the CSP, both countries had committed to work together across a range of areas. Prime Minister Scott Morrison on 1st July 2020 pushed a new aggressive defence strategy even as he mentioned the ongoing border stand-off between New Delhi and Beijing and rising tensions in the South China Sea. Enhancing its defence spending by



about 40 per cent, Australia released its new 2020 Defence Strategic Update, and Force Structure Plan, under which it mentioned India as one of the main committed partners in the Indo-Pacific.

(Amb) Anil Wadhwa, Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation added that the much-talk about virtual Summit between PM Modi and PM Morrison on 4 June confirmed the all-round improvement in their bilateral ties which had been elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. the MOUs signed during the Modi – Morrison virtual Summit on 4 June were i) The Implementing arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science and Technology to the MOU on Defence Cooperation provided a framework for growing collaboration between the technology research organizations of both countries, ii) PM Modi also conveyed that India was working on its Mars and Moon missions, and Australia could work with India in collaboration, iii) the MOU on cooperation in the field of mining and processing of critical and strategic minerals would ensure a long-standing supply and investment relationship between the two countries in the area of critical minerals, iv) the MOU on Vocational Education and Training would extend the collaboration between Indian and Australian agencies across the full spectrum of enhancement of training curriculum, v) A new collaborative agreement on water resources management, training and education, and for developing sustainable solutions for water and economic development and water recycling also was in line with the recommendations in the draft report, vi) , The two sides had agreed through the joint statement, to have a one -off special Covid 19 collaboration round based of the scientific reserve fund in 2020. The draft report recommended enhancement of the Fund, and also proposed setting up of a similar funds in the field of humanities as well as startups, vii) , the flagging of the need to strengthen India Australian partnership on grains management and logistics to reduce post-harvest losses, rationalize costs and supply chain logistics and setting up educational campuses in each other's countries during the Summit were also proposals in the draft report, viii) regardless of India's stand on the RCEP, the report recommended, and the Summit had endorsed this, that India and Australia would now restart their Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which were stalled due to RCEP. There was a lot to gain if this comes about quickly for both countries.

Dr. Asutosh Misra, Chief Executive and Executive Director, Institute for Australia India Engagement (IAIE), Editor in chief- India News on parallel tunes added that virtual summit in the month of June was a reciprocation of warmth and support that the countries had been beholding for each other , as the political stalwarts of both the nations addressed each other in vernacular languages. The countries had also stressed on transparency, support, and resilience in terms of International Policy approach in regards to Indo-Pacific sustainable development. In case of Australia it had been very vocal of distress against violation of Humanistic approach, migration , discrimination and collision in some of the Asian region and cyber hacking issues. Australia had stressed on developing steps of synergic engagements between countries , boosting Indonesia as geographically it helped to build ties between countries and support their growth through boosting their economy, trade, sustainability and sizeable support to Indian Diasporas and thereby attaining historic heights in the future of Indo-Pacific.

On the concluding note , after an enriching discussions and interaction with participants over cyber issues, acts of China affecting global politics, opportunities of India-Australia engagements over tourism,

religious –cultural diversities, education and research it was noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had thrown many challenges to the global community . While Australia had been comparatively successful in flattening the COVID-19 curve and containing the spread of virus, India had a long way to go and here lay the need for cooperation particularly with regard to health research and development between the two countries.

International Webinar on Saga of Galwan

The International Webinar titled *Saga of Galwan*, held on 11 July , 2020 commenced with an introductory note of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies where she herself introduced the audience with the speakers and requested the coordinator of the Webinar Mr. Rana Banerjee to conduct the session.

Sri Rana Banerjee a distinguished fellow and the member of the Governing Council for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India, in his brief introductory speech pointed out the importance of the present Galwan crisis , spoke briefly about the speakers of the Webinar and requested Mr. Pratim Ranjan Bose to initiate his deliberation.

Mr. Pratim Ranjan Bose , an eminent journalist and author, initiated his presentation on the Galwan valley of Eastern Ladakh , which recently was the epicentre of a major border clash between Indian and Chinese armed forces. His discussion was primarily focused on the reference of the book “ *Servant of Sahibs*” which was based on the life and journey of Ghulam Rasool Galwan an explorer, who travelled extensively along the Silk routes connecting Leh , Gilgit-Baltistan, Xingjiang and Tibet autonomous regions and after whom the Galwan valley is named. He said that Ghulam Rasool Galwan came from the outcast Galwan community of Kashmir, who started his early life as a porter and accompanied many noteworthy names of British India, who were out there in Ladakh to protect defence and strategic interests of the colonial power and shaped the history of the region. He ended as the chief native assistant of the British joint commissioner at Leh . He interestingly commented that the local Ladakis were proud to associate themselves with the larger Indian identity. He ended his speech by commenting that a look into Galwan’s book along



with other references including the notable memoir of Sarat Chandra Das, “The Diary of a spy” might reveal what was happening on India’s northern border today, had its roots to the conflict-ridden past of the region.

Lieutenant General, John R Mukherjee, started his discussion by explaining the geo- politics and geo- strata related to India and China . He opined that as because Japan and India were the principal barrier to the Chinese expansionist policies in East and South Asia respectively it made both the countries as natural enemies of China . He thereafter provided vital information on the history of Sino- Indian border disputes and categorically explained the nature of the dispute in the eastern, western and the middle sector of the Sino- Indian border. In his presentation he mentioned about the several bilateral agreements starting from the Colombo Plan of 1963 ,1993 Bilateral Peace and Tranquillity agreement , 2005, 2009 and 2016 Wuhan agreement which were signed by the two countries to ease out border tensions. . According to Gen. Mukherjee , Indian support to exiled Tibetan religious leader Dalai Lama, middle kingdom syndrome , war hysteria etc. were some of the principal causes of the Chinese aggression towards India. He opined that the rapid economic growth led China not only in the quick modernization of the people liberation army but it also gave additional impetus in building offensive infrastructure in Tibet bordering China . He also pointed out the nexus between China and Pakistan to contain India’s rise as a global power . . General Mukherjee also pointed out a series of some other causes which might have led in the growing hostile attitudes of China like , Growing Indian ties with USA, Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Indian increasing interest in South China Sea, Not bowing down to China and repeated denial to participate OBOR & BCIM & BRI initiative, changing status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the abolition of article 370, and 35A , presumed threat over the CEPC due to the rapid infrastructure development by India in Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh the potential treat of Indian’s capturing Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Aksai Chin region, apprehension that India might bloc their important sea trade routes during crisis etc. He was hopeful that such crisis could pragmatically be solved by rational foreign policy and non-antagonistic economic partnership.

Dr. Anders Corr’s, Principal at Corr Analytics: Political Risk Analysis, whose discussion centred round the recent Border skirmish in eastern Ladakh and the systematic Chinese aggression in this region. He said that such brutal aggression by China could be challenged if India joined hands with western democratic powers like United States of America, European Union, United Kingdom, Australia and Asian powers like Japan and Asean countries. He further added that effective economic sanctions over China by world powers could be an effective tool for containing Chinese aggression in this region. In his deliberation he opined that Chinese aggression had always been a source of problem in Ladakh because on innumerable occasions Chinese army forcefully occupied the grazing lands of the Ladaki people. He thereafter pointed out the historiography of the border dispute between India and China and said that during the present Galwan incident the Chinese army intruded more than 100 metres of Indian territory. He reiterated that to deter China in the future not only international economic sanctions must be imposed, but India would seek closer defence cooperation with countries like the

United States, Japan, Australia, Britain, and France against forces like Iran, Russia, Pakistan, China and North Korea.

Mr. ShubirBhaumik, Editorial Director,Eastern Link and former BBC-Reuters correspondent in his passion driven deliberation commented that India would be cautious while dealing with a large and powerful competitor like China . He severely criticized the policy followed by the present government in dealing with the present Galwan crisis. He stated that though Indian citizens had the right to get proper information about the present Galwan crisis yet the government for unknown reason had denied the citizens to get holistic information of the Sino- Indian border skirmishes in Eastern Ladakh. Sri Bhaumik supported the Indian Army on this issue and praised the bravery of the Indian soldiers who gave befitting reply to the Chinese aggression in Galwan valley. He thereafter opined that Indian soldiers must be adequately equipped with modern arms and ammunitions to deal with such crisis and pointed out the necessity of a comprehensive and holistic policy in this regard. He ended his discussion by commenting that an aggressive China was only invincible when India had an effective plan to deter Chinese aggression. However he believed that at the end peace was an ultimate solution for both the countries.

The coordinator of the programme Rana Mukherjee while Commenting on the Sino- Pakistan economic cooperation specially the CEPC initiative, he pointed out that the economy of Pakistan had an adverse effect on the momentum of the CEPC initiative. He added that lack of water supply , labour employment issue , and terrorist attack by the Baluchi rebels had made the Gwader port an important centre of the CEPC initiative vulnerable. He ended his discussion by stating that while CEPC remained very important as a flagship project for China in the context of Pakistan's paranoid insecurities vis-à-vis India, China's support was likely to remain confined more to the moral than material.

In the questioner session, several important questions were asked to the speakers relating the present Galwan crisis, Chinese aggression and Indian response such crisis etc. which were replied by them with critical analysis.

The webinar concluded with the vote of thanks from Sri KrisnenduBakshi on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Webinar on Covid Crisis and Revival of Tourism in West Bengal

The Webinar titled “Covid Crisis and Revival of Tourism in West Bengal”, held on 18 July , 2020 commenced with the inaugural address of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the audience with the speakers and thereafter implored the coordinator of the Webinar Mr. Raj Basu to conduct the session.

Mr. Raj Basu, Tourism Advisor and an eminent Conservationist focused his speech on the impact of the pandemic Covid 19 and its effect over the travel and tourism industry. He opined that rethinking

about travel and tourism in the post corona scenario was important because this industry had a huge potential to create new jobs. He praised the initiative of the Government of West Bengal and the Government of India with special reference of the Indian Tourism Kolkata for patronizing and promoting tourism industry in West Bengal.

Mr. Sayak Nandi, Tourist Information Officer, India Tourism Kolkata assured that India Tourism Kolkata through their initiatives had always tried to increase the employability in the hospitality industry of eastern India. But he regretted that due to the on-going



pandemic such initiatives received a major setback. He commented that Bengal, being a key market for the tourism industry, the reliable data showed how inflow of tourists in Bengal decreased during the pre-pandemic period. He discussed about the safety protocols issued by the government for the tourism industry to ensure safety of the tourists and to prevent any form of pandemic outbreak in areas adjacent to the tourist spots. He educated the audience about the various initiatives taken by the government to encourage skilled individuals and fresh creativity in tourism industry.

Mr. Norbu Lama, Takdah Heritage Society, Darjeeling, primarily focused on the concept of Home Stay and discussed how Takdah a remote village in Darjeeling had become a successful model of the home stay concept. He opined that home stay had immensely helped the people of the local region. It not only improved the economic condition of the village but also boosted self-confidence and positive attitude of the local people of Takdah. According to him, rural tourism had become a form of sustainable tourism. He recommended new concept like healing tourism which could play an important role and wished that in the post Covid-19 situation tourists would stay for a long time and would enjoy the regional culture and cuisine.

Mr. Biswajit Saha, Jaldapara Jungle Camp, Dooars, initiated his discussion by sketching the transformation of Dooars from a site of illegal poaching of animals and timber trade to a popular tourist destination. He pointed out the initiatives and role of the Association of Conservation and Tourism (established in 1991), who educated the poor people of the region against cutting down of trees for short term monetary gains and involved them in their afforestation programme. He assured that the tourism industry in this region not only had strictly maintained the Covid -19 prevention guidelines but also had organised on a continuous basis the local awareness campaign programmes to educate common people that the tourists were not corona carriers, a potential danger for the local community.

Professor Malay Mukhopahyay, Viswa Bharati University, Shantiniketan, discussed in details the various aspects of Edu- tourism in Bengal . He emphasised on the understanding geographical landscape of the region which he believed would be the pre requisite towards responsible and sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism would not only help in emphasizing the distinctive physical and socio-cultural aspects of a place but also enhanced the well-being of the locals. He thereafter discussed the initiatives and endeavors taken by him to encourage Edu- Tourism and Geo-Tourism. He briefly discussed the concept of river trekking and commented that such initiatives would help the trekkers to build up relations with the local people and would help them to have a holistic understanding of the region. He stressed the need of building infrastructure along such river trekking routes where the trekkers could stay during their course of journey. He thereafter discussed the concept of Marker Stone which according to him would identify the source of the river and how it could be developed into a tourist destination.

Ms. Akanka Garg, Sundarban Tiger Camp, emphasized the protocols needed to be followed by the tourism industry during the on-going pandemic. She emphasized the necessity of following the Covid-19 prevention protocols chalked out by the government so that corona virus could not spread to the villages adjacent to the popular tourist destinations. She added that the tourism industry would not only follow the Covid-19 prevention protocols but must effectively communicate and display these protocols so that the tourists had a knowledge about the Covid-19 prevention norms.

While summing up the webinar Mr. Raj Basunot only emphasized the importance of effective new policies to revive the tourism industry but also making tourism interesting through new initiatives like river trekking tourism and the concept of healing villages.

The Webinar ended with the vote of thanks from Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata.

International Webinar on Ethnic Fissures & State Responses of Pakistan : An Overview

The International Webinar titled “ Ethnic Fissures & State Response of Pakistan: An Overview” , held on 14th August , 2020 commenced with the inaugural address of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the distinguished speakers with the audience and requested the moderator of the webinar Mr. Rana Banerji to conduct the session.

Mr. Rana Banerji, a distinguish fellow of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India , initiated his inaugural address by greeting the people of Pakistan on the eve of their 74th Independence Day celebration. He said that though in the recent past democracy had seen partial success yet it still remained a hybrid state where the Military establishment was ruling from behind the curtain. He ended his address by saying that, dominance of the Punjabi speaking people of Pakistan in every sphere

of the country's national life had created ethnic fissures and increased ethnic differences between the various ethnic groups residing within the border of the country.

Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, Chairman, United Kashmir People's National Party, Switzerland, focused his deliberation on the Pakistani occupied Kashmir. He articulated the misery faced by the Kashmiri people residing in POK. He added that the 'Two Nation Theory' created by the Muslim League was disastrous for the people of Pakistan because it negated all historical nation. He said that till now several ethnic groups were continuing with their struggle and were facing government enrage in form of persecution and killing.

He raised the issue how Pakistan was aiding the terrorists in Kashmir and Gilgit- Baltistan and interestingly commented that the local residents were continuously protesting against the Pakistani government who had not only converted this place into a hub of terrorist activities but also had ignored the basic rights of the local people. The voices of the Kashmiri people to free themselves from Pakistani rule had resulted in the state taking repressive action.

Professor NaelaQuadri Baloch, President, World Baloch, Women's Forum, Canada, in her speech said that the creation, constitution and governance of Pakistan had transformed the country into a failed state. She said that though the 1940's Pakistan Resolution promised rights of the nations which voluntarily annexed, as the "federating units" on the basis of their history, culture and ethnicity, gave them equal right to secede, the constitution of Pakistan did not recognize the nations at all. It took away the national areas as administrative units. She commented that the various ethnic groups in Pakistan were being exploited and the basic rights of these nationalities are still denied. She pointed out the deep cultural and civilizational linkages between India and Balochistan and added that the Balochi people were against the division of India. She opined that there was no real Pakistani identity and raised her hope that people must not leave their thousand years identity for an artificial state and created identity like Pakistan.

Mr. BaseerNaweed, Executive Director, International Human Rights Council, Hong Kong, severely criticized the principle of the Two Nation theory which was assumed to be the backbone of the



Pakistani nation. He opined that this basic ideology of Pakistan was a historic blunder, that resulted in discontinuation with the history, and old civilization of whole sub-continent.. He added that the two nation policy not only gave the Pakistani state an impunity but also initiated an appeasement policy towards the terrorists and the fundamentalist section of the society. On the issue of cross border terrorism he opined that the cross-border terrorism became the part of ideology of Pakistan. He raised the issue of inadequate Land Reform System in Pakistan and accused the higher military leadership as land grabbers who had been benefited by the lack of proper land reform systems.

Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, Former Justice , Supreme Court of Bangladesh started his presentation by commenting that it was Jinnah's aspiration which led the creation of the Two Nation Theory which was opposed by eminent Muslim leaders like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. He narrated how military generals like Tikka Khan was responsible for genocide in Baluchistan and East Pakistan. Quoting the United Nation reports on Human Rights of 2018,2019, he showed how there had been rampant violation of gender and human rights in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. He concluded his deliberation by quoting Maulana Azad and said that in near future Pakistan as a state would cease to exist.

The last speaker of the webinar, Dr. Hidayatullah Bhutto, UK, Europe organiser, World Sindhi Congress, UK, like all his previous speakers criticized the Two Nation Theory of Pakistan, which remained as the founding pillar of the country. He meaningfully commented that the state of Pakistan did not believe in peaceful coexistence and had since become a country where radical religious institutions had a freeway. He concluded that centralization of Pakistan had made the country instable and demanded that the five major ethnic nationality in Pakistan must have the right of self – determination.

During the questioner session, several important questions were asked on various aspects and the distinguished panellists adequately replied them.

The webinar concluded with the vote of thanks from Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Webinar on Myanmar of Today: From Indian Perspectives

Myanmar since its independence had witnessed prolong military rule.

The critical balance between the civil and the military leadership of Myanmar thus faced a severe crisis after the general election of November 2020 where the ruling party National League of Democracy registered an astounding victory defeating the pro military Union Solidarity Development party. The army disputed the results, claiming that the vote was fraudulent which according to some political expert was the driving force that led the military leadership to orchestrate a coup and to establish their firm grip on the political power of the country.

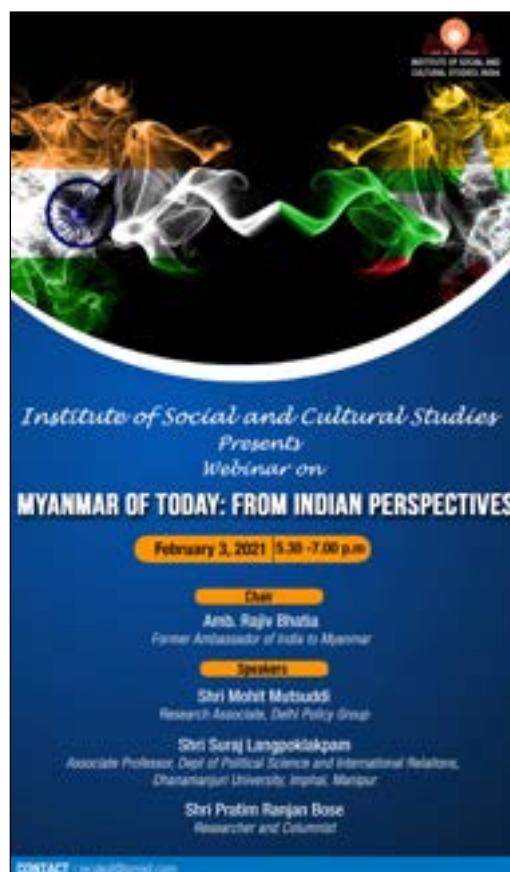
Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India as a part of its multidisciplinary endeavor, organized on

3 February, 2021 a webinar comprising distinguished scholars on Myanmar to carry out an academic inquest to understand the implication of the recent military coup in determining the future of Indo-Myanmar relations and also shaping the security scenario of the Indo- Pacific region.

This significant webinar was moderated by Ambassador Rajib Bhatia, Former Ambassador of India to Myanmar. He commenced his introductory deliberation by highlighting the significance of the present issue. Briefly narrating the political history of Myanmar he stressed the necessity to understand the plethora of internal and external dimensions that might have played a role in this military coup.

Mr. Mohit Mutsuddhi, Research Associate, Delhi Policy Group in his presentation said that the slow and thoughtful transition of Myanmar towards democracy received a major setback after the country's military leadership staged a sudden coup to remove the elected civilian government from power. In his address he presented a few probable reasons like the alleged electoral malpractices by the ruling National League for Democracy (NLA), political aspiration of the Myanmar by the powerful military chief Min Aung Hlaing behind the current military action etc. The speaker subsequently in his discourse analyzed the crucial dynamics of the Sino-Indian relations and how it was going to get shaped in the post coup scenario. According to the speaker India had close economic and military cooperation with Myanmar and hoped that it would pursue the policy which aimed towards a more stable and participatory order in this important south east Asian nation.

Prof. Suraj Langpoklakpam, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Dhanamanjuri University, Imphal, Manipur during his deliberation not only discussed India- Myanmar relation from a general perspective but from the perspective of North East Indian region also. He also pointed out the close association between the two nations in the non alignment movement and the cordial relationship maintained by the successive military regimes of Myanmar. He urged that the Myanmar policy of the Indian government would not be seen from a mere security point of view and demanded a more inclusive policy by incorporating the demands and aspirations of the local north east Indian people. In the course of his discussion he not only pointed out the ever increasing Chinese influence in Myanmar but also revealed the uneasy relationship it had with the Myanmar's civilian government and surmised a possible Chinese role behind the military coup. Since India had a close military and economic interest with Myanmar, he opined that India must take a pragmatic policy that



suited their national interest .

Mr. Pratim Ranjan Bose, Researcher and Columnist confined his deliberation on the economic aspects of the Indo- Myanmar relation. He stated the significant investment made by India in Myanmar's education, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and information technology sector. He opined that India must follow a pragmatic policy for maintaining a stable relation with the military regime of Myanmar that enjoyed significant dominance in the socio- political system of the country. He urged the Indian government for initiating a concessional trade agreement with Myanmar, fast tracking the bilateral border trade and finally increasing India's presence in Myanmar economic spheres.

The moderator thereafter summed up the webinar stating that though India had not fully utilized its potentiality in the economic sphere of Myanmar, yet India was perusing a policy towards more close economic cooperation with its south east Asian neighbor.

During the question answer session, important questions were raised .The questions were adequately answered by the distinguished speakers.

The webinar ended with the vote of thanks from Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India.

Webinar on West Bengal's Judiciary in the face of Covid

The Webinar series titled "West Bengal's Judiciary in the face of Covid" held on on August 28, 2020 commenced with the opening statement of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the distinguished speakers of the webinar and thereafter adjured the moderator of the webinar advocate Jayanta Kumar Mitra to coordinate the session .

The moderator of the webinar ,Mr.Jayanta Kumar Mitra, Senior Advocate and Barrister – in – Law in his introductory speech touched the issue of how the on-going Covid Pandemic had been impacting the overall functioning of the judicial system in India. He said that Covid 19 had seriously hindered the justice delivery system of the country including the state of West Bengal and emphasised the necessity of having virtual courts to deliver justice to the litigants.

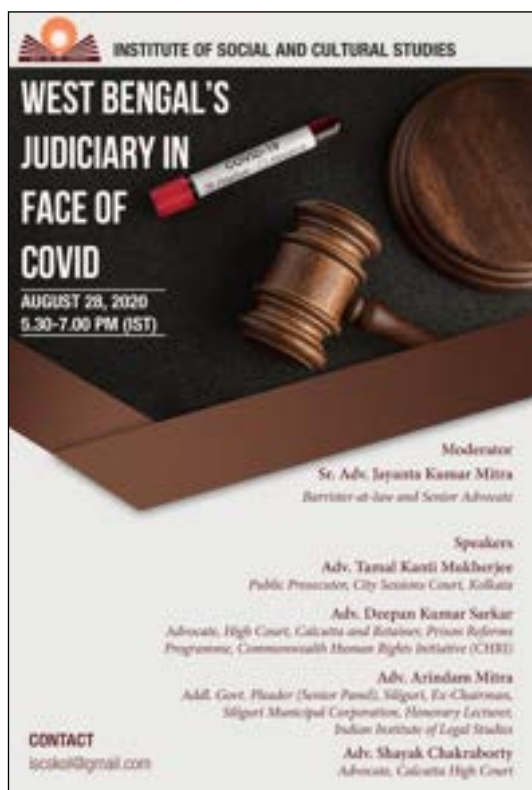
Mr.Tamal Mukherjee , Public Prosecutor, City Sessions Court, Kolkata narrated the negative impact of the global pandemic which had spread its wings in every sphere of human life , and commented that judiciary system had resorted to virtual hearing in order to make justice delivery system operational. . However he pointed out that due to lack of best technological and communicational infrastructural development such virtual hearing was facing serious problems.

Advocate Deepan Kumar Sarkar, High Court, Calcutta and the Retainer, Prison Reforms Programme, Commonwealth Human Right Initiative, very eloquently started his deliberation by analysing our constitution which clearly narrated the functions of the judiciary, executive and the legislature

respectively. He briefly discussed the lack of development in the judicial infrastructure of West Bengal and focused his discussion on the impact of the pandemic over the functioning of the judiciary system in this province. He said that due to the ongoing pandemic the judicial system of West Bengal had been delivering justice through virtual hearing. However in doing so the system was facing technological and connectivity bottlenecks. He opined that to make virtual hearing more effective better internet connection was a necessity. He also raised an important issue of inequality which was associated with such virtual hearing. He opined that people with low income group, or from a distant village might fail to avail the service of such virtual hearing hindering their right to get free and fair justice. He said that at present lower judiciary was facing a huge problem to adapt the new technologically driven model of justice deliverance. He suggested a few steps to solve such problems like urging the state government to release adequate fund so that the infrastructure for the virtual connection could be set up specially for the lower courts. He recommended that the judiciary should not restrict itself with the urgent cases and also proposed to start physical hearing in a phased manner which could take place by following adequate health guidelines.

Mr. Arindam Mitra, Additional Government Pleader (Senior Panel), Siliguri, in his presentation through a plethora of statistics showed how the global pandemic had created a negative impact over the activities of the judicial system throughout the country. He concluded his discussion by pointing out a recent trend that had emerged within the judicial system during the pandemic where due to the delay in deliverance of justice the litigants were going for settling their issues through out of court settlement formula.

The last speaker of the webinar Mr. Shayak Chakrabarty, Advocate, High Court, Calcutta, commented that until the rise of the pandemic judiciary never took the model of the e-courts seriously. He said that time had come when legal experts must adopt themselves with the new model of e-courts. However he opined that such technologically driven justice delivery system had its own drawbacks, i.e. lack of proper connectivity related infrastructure. He pointed out that the judiciary during the pandemic period was only handling the urgent cases. But the definition of urgent was so subjective that anybody could feel his/her case to be urgent. To solve such situation he proposed that more judges and more matters could be covered through virtual hearing. Like many other speakers he also pointed the importance and the advantages of physical hearing system.



Jas Uppal, eminent Jurist, in her précised deliberation commented that like various parts of the world India too was facing the problem of virtual hearing. She opined that the right to access to justice was a fundamental Human right and its denial was not advisable. So during the pandemic when the justice deliverance system had come to a standstill and online hearing remains as the only viable option it was necessary to build up an effective communication system to sustain virtual hearing. She also pointed out that young lawyers must take the responsibility to make the litigants more technologically literate so that virtual hearing could become more effective.

During the questioner session, several important questions were raised by the participants on various aspects of how the judicial system is coaping up with the danger of coping up with the dangers of the present global pandemic which the distinguished panellists replied adequately.

The webinar concluded with the vote of thanks from Kankana Roy, on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Hybrid Seminar on the impact of COVID-19 on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in South Bengal's trade, commerce and economy

COVID-19 and the measures to prevent its spread brought about most unprecedented public health and socio-economic crisis in our lifetime. On the economic front, most vulnerable are the people engaged in the informal sectors and in small trade and commerce.

In India more than 110 million people are employed by country's 63 million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). It is the second largest employment generator after agriculture. Indian MSMEs produce more than 6,000 products for local and global consumption.

The announcement of country wide lockdown dragged MSME owners, employers and external stakeholders in times, have had negative of finished goods, of raw material and employees to work in supply processes, debt wages/salaries, etc. As it appears, section of MSMEs default on debt under scenario of an extended but each sector will challenges. Ambiguity and bounce back of new unexpected impact on supply procurement availability of production and repayments, statutory dues, a substantial in India may the emerging lockdown — face different in future trade normal is keeping



financial institutions at bay for extending any new financial lending or cover potential risk. This all-round uncertainty needs a push by government, to boost market confidence and bring back regular cash flow in economy. Many enterprises lay-off their workers because of inability to pay salaries, vacate their offices due to incurring expenses and halt their production due to stopped demand.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission (ABM) was launched to face two burning issues simultaneously; one being boost to MSMEs and other being less dependent upon foreign nations. Out of 15 relief measures declared under this package, 6 were entirely focused to empower MSMEs. It is not known how much impact the ABM created as far as West Bengal is concerned where 14% of India's MSMEs are located.

With this backdrop in mind, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, (ISCS), India organized a research Based Conference on “The Impact of COVID-19 on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise in South Bengal's Trade, Commerce and Economy” on a hybrid platform on 12th December 2020.

In his Welcome Address, Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS articulated that the severity of the problem related to Covid 19 induced the Institute to enlarge its scope of activities to the field of public health and economics. The distinguished speaker Sri Gautam De, Regional Director, RTC, ICCR, Kolkata narrated the loss of self-employed jobs as corona virus spread. The Guest of Honor Dr. K. Rangarajan, Professor and Head, Centre for MSME Studies, Kolkata Campus, Indian Institute for Foreign Trade explained the linkages within the MSME and how it suffered as Covid 19 spread. The Key Note Speaker Professor Rajagopal Dhar Chakraborti, former Director IISWBM, Kolkata viewed that Covid 19 targeted the old and people with co morbidities and its impact on the health of productive labour was minimal. The suffering was essentially a short-term economic downswing and would bounce back as we had enough antibodies through herd immunity and /or mass vaccination programs.

The business session started under title “Mapping the Threshold of COVID-19 on MSME's, Trade and Commerce of South Bengal”, moderated by Dr Ranajoy Bhattacharya, Professor, Indian Institute for Foreign Trade with distinguished speakers, Ajeya Bandyopadhyay, Partner, Infrastructure and Government Advisory, KPMG(India), Ms KekaSarma, General Secretary, The Bharat Chambers of Commerce, Shri P.K Das, Dy. Director, MSME-DI, Kolkata, Sri Ritwik Mukherjee, Senior Assistant Editor, Financial Chronicles, Kolkata and Shri Firoz Ahmed, Assistant Director, MSME-DI, Kolkata.

Ms KekaSarma, Secretary General, Bharat Chamber of Commerce observed that Southern Bengal was massively hit by super cyclone International Webinar on India-Nepal in Present Times while the whole globe was passing through corona catastrophe. She explained how the thousands of small, units producing colourful LED lights fitted along designs sketched on fibreglass board in Chandannagar virtually faced closures owing to the regulations on the imports of electronic intermediaries from China. She suggested several measures to rejuvenate MSMEs in South Bengal.

The second business session was titled, “Instrumenting New Normal growth demography for South Bengal's MSME's, Trade and Commerce” and was moderated by Prof. Jyotish Prakash Basu, former Vice Chancellor and Professor of Economics, West Bengal State University Barasat with Swami Vedatitananda

Correspondent, Polytechnic College and Skill Development Centre, Shilpamandir, Belurmath, Dr.Sreerupa Roy, Assistant Professor of Economics, Dept. of Economics, Krishnanagar Government College, Nadia, West Bengal , Dr.Subhasis Bhattacharya ,Professor of Economics, Sidho- Kanho- Birsha University, Purulia and Dr. Bhaskar Goswami, Associate Professor, Dept. of Economics, University of Burdwan as distinguished speakers.

Swami Vedatitananda in his paper , Impact of lockdown on MSMEs in Bengal, viewed that MSMEs which werelabor intensive had suffered the most. There was unprecedented migration of labor as a consequence of lockdown. People who had picked up valuable skills moved away from the production line on COVID-19 fatality apprehensions. Lots of people who migrated to other states returned to their families in West Bengal with no sustainable livelihood. Cash flow was another constraint for local MSMEs, whatever reserves they had all gone with committed expenditures. He recommended a complete loan waiver could only save these employment providing units. Cost of doing business had increased exponentially due to lockdown. The new health and safety compliances had added to the cost.

Dr Bhaskar Goswami, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Burdwan views the crisis as twofold: one was the crisis resulting from the health pandemic and the other was the economic crisis as a manifestation of COVID pandemic. He felt that the MSMEs were in healthy shape till 2016 but three exogenous factors -demonetization, the GST regime and the Covid 19, all came in a sequence to shake the very survival roots of the MSMEs. Only time could tell whether MSMEs could survive in a formal economy with stiff competition from the large business houses.

Prof. Jyotish Prakash Basu, Professor of Economics, Dept. of Economics, West Bengal State University, Barasat, Kolkata, in his paper , Impact of COVID-19 on MSME in South West Bengal viewed that India's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) was largest in the world after China. MSMEs fostered rural industrialization , reduced regional imbalances, provided huge employment and acting as the ancillary units of the large industries , contributed significantly to the socioeconomic development in India. He too found problem like low liquidity or crunch of cash flows and lack of workforce as daily-wage earners shifted to their villages. The paper mentioned 'Pottery activity', Beekeeping Activity' and Agarbati Making project' under Graminodyog Vikas Yojana(GVY) scheme. The objectives of these schemes were to enhance the capacity building of the artisans and workforce involved. The appropriate implementation of such schemes might achieve self-Reliant India or Atmanirbhar Bharat, he thought.

Sreerupa Ray, Assistant Professor of Economics, Krishnagar Government College made an analysis of the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis over the Cutlery Cluster of Jhalda, Tassar Silk Cluster of Raghunathpur and the Handloom Cluster of Santipur. Her findings were: most of the MSMEs operated outside the formal network, the units rarely maintained accounts, paid taxes or adhered to regulatory norms.; credit funding generally came from informal source; revenue dropped while costs of production increased sharply; capacity utilization was very low; digitalization of production or sales was very low despite the use of smart phones. She suggested immediate governmental intervention as way out.

The Valedictory Session was addressed by Dr.Asim Pada Chakraborty, Chairman, ISCS, India.

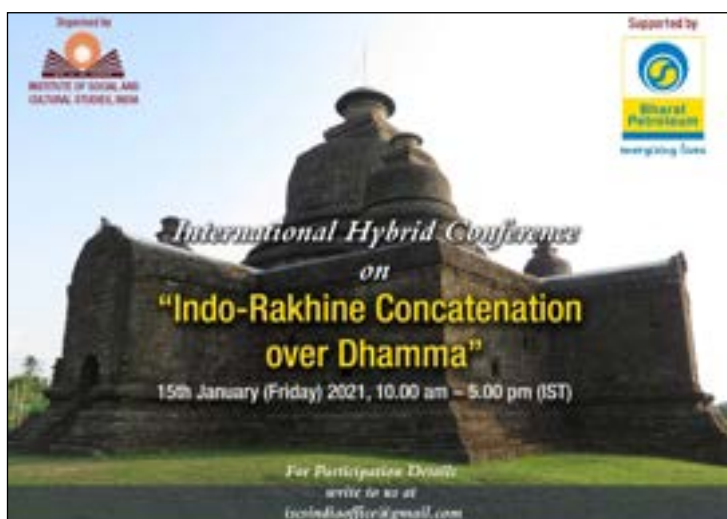
Hybrid conference on Indo-Rakhine Concatenation over Dhamma

Rakhine province of Myanmar has shared a symbiotic bond with India with regard to language, literature, art, culture and religion. The encounter between Rakhine and eastern India has produced a composite culture, which manifests the mutual reciprocation between the two. There are myriads of archaeological, literary and archival evidences to render the rich heritage of the cross-cultural influences. The One Day International Hybrid Conference on Indo-Rakhine Concatenation over Dhamma held on 15th January, 2021 at RTC, ICCR,, Kolkata organized by Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India was a landmark endeavour to explore this forgotten phase of history.

In the inaugural session, the Guests of Honour Sri Shakti Sinha, Honorary Director, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies, MS University, Vadodara, Distinguished fellow, India Foundation, New Delhi, Non Resident Senior Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore and Sri Gautam De, Regional Director, RTC-ICCR, Kolkata were present. Sri Aridam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India delivered the welcome address. In his, welcome address, Mr. Mukherjee welcomed the distinguished guests and dignitaries present over there. He explained the objective of the conference along with his personal correspondence with the history and cultural traditions of Myanmar.

The first academic session entitled Buddhism in Rakhine: Practices and Precepts was a hybrid session. . Dr Nu Mra Zan, Museum consultant and Director-General (Retd.), Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Myanmar, chaired the session. The first speaker of the session was Dr Sumanapal Bhikkhu, Guest Faculty, Department of Pali and Department of Languages, University of Calcutta and Chairman, Bodhi-Nidhi Social Welfare Cultural Association, Kolkata. As a practising monk of the Theravada Buddhist tradition, Dr Bhikkhu discussed the moral principles and organizational norms practiced by the monks in the Rakhine province of Myanmar. He also talked about the history of cultural and ecclesiastical correspondence between the Rakhine province of Myanmar and the Eastern India, especially Bengal.

His presentation on the principles and the moral the Theravada in Rakhine. The the session was Assistant Professor, English, Sri Vidyamahapitha. In Amin talked about correspondence Rakhine and the orientalist ideology Rakhine, as the



was primarily based of monastic order codes followed by School of Buddhism second speaker of Mr. Subham Amin, Department of Ramkrishna Sarada his presentation, Mr. the history of cultural between Bengal and imperial strategy and of constructing land of the 'other' to

severe the cultural bond between India and Myanmar. He also pointed out the shifting paradigm of the perspective of the Bengali middle class 'Babus' about Rakhine in the colonial period. The last speaker of the session was Mr. Win Kyaing, Principal, Field School of Archaeology, Myanmar. As a professional archaeologist and expert of the history of Myanmar, Mr. Kyaing delivered an elaborated presentation on the historical development of different Buddhist traditions in Myanmar as well as the archaeological and scriptural evidences of the correspondence between India and Myanmar. His presentation consists of the principles of Buddhism practised in the monasteries, the role of dynasties to patronize Buddhism, different Buddhist cults present in Myanmar and the living cultural traditions emanated from Buddhism in Rakhine and Myanmar. The presentations were followed by a brainstorming discussion session in which the audiences had a lively interaction with the speakers. At the end, Dr. Nu Mra Zan skilfully summed up the discussions and expressed thanks to all participants and presenters for their participation.

In the second academic session entitled Monasteries and Images: Architecture, Style and Iconography, Dr. Bob Hudson, Associate, Asian Studies Programme, University of Sidney, Australia chaired the session. The session consisted of three presentations by Dr. Jacques P. Leider, Ecole française de l'Extrême-Orient, French Institute of Asian Studies, Mr. Ye Myat Lwin, Junior Officer, Department of Ethnic Literature and Culture, Myanmar and Dr. Nu Mra Zan, Museum consultant and Director-General (Retd.), Department of Archaeology and National Museum, Myanmar. The audiences were acquainted with the stylistic and iconographic details of the Buddhist monasteries in Rakhine and the rest of Myanmar. The speakers talked about the technicalities of the architecture of the monasteries as well as the archaeological and scriptural evidences to substantiate the cultural encounter between India and Myanmar. The presentations were followed by a brainstorming discussion session in which the audiences had a lively interaction with the speakers. At the end, Dr. Bob Hudson skilfully summed up the discussions and expressed thanks to all participants and presenters for their participation.

In the third academic session entitled Rakhine's Connected History through Ages, Dr. Jacques P. Leider, Ecole française de l'Extrême-Orient, French Institute of Asian Studies, chaired the session. The session consisted of four presentations by Dr. Suchandra Ghosh, Professor, Department of History, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, Professor Saw Tun Aung, Professor of Preventive and Community Dentistry, University of Dental Medicine, Yangon and Scholar of Rakhine Culture, Religion and History, Professor Aye Chan, Professor Emeritus, Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan and Dr. Shikha Jain, Director, DRONAH and Chairperson, DRONAH Foundation, State Convenor, INTACH Haryana Chapter, Vice President, ICOFORT ISC, ICOMOS, Visiting Faculty, UNESCO C2C, Wildlife Institute of India. The last session was a mixed bag in which the presenters shared their views on different aspects of the history of the Rakhine region and the journey of Rakhine from tradition to modernity. This session was also followed by an interactive session between the presenters and the audiences. At the end, Dr. Jacques P. Leider skilfully summed up the discussions and expressed thanks to all participants and presenters for their participation.

The conference itself turned out to be an occasion to acknowledge how even today the indelible truss of religion and cultural legacies continues to countries and communities invariantly.

Hybrid conference on “West Bengal’s Global Reach Through Art and Artistry” and Craft Haat (Craft Exhibition)

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as an autonomous Think Tank had been addressing history and happening in collaboration with The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Branch Secretariat, Kolkata in many occasions, yet again joined hands over “West Bengal’s Global Reach Through Art and Artistry” - on 12th February, 2021, a Day Long event held at Hotel Hindusthan International Kolkata with discussions and representation of Indigenous crafts as an endeavour to retrieve the rich legacies, diversities and confluences of the State over splendors of Crafts and tales of their makers.

The Event was marked with an Inaugural session and with the remarks of Shri Arindam Mukherjee- Director, ISCS, India who thanked all the Distinguished Guests, Consul Generals and other participants who gathered for the hosted event

Shri Arup Kumar Saha, Head, The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Branch Secretariat office, Kolkata in his speech informed that his department was mandated to, to support the state governments on their diplomatic Outreach and also to, to help them in the trade and investment Etc.

The Distinguished Speaker Sri. C. Rajshekhar, Head of Department, State Division Ministry of External Affairs (GoI) welcomed all the participants, Consul Generals like, the Australian Consul General Mr. Daniel Sim, the Japanese Consul General Nakamura, the Italian Consul General Ian Luca Rubagoti, the Brazilian Honorary Consul Pradeep Khemkaji, and distinguished guests who attended the event irrespective of COVID-19 threats and defined the initiative as a significant step towards ushering to normalcy after crossing a dark tunnel of pandemic worldwide.

The Guest of Honour Sri. AdwaitaGadanayak, Director General, National Gallery of Modern Art ascertained that it was a right time for us to get serious and make a decision to preserve our art, since indigenous art was in caveat and we would develop avenues to preserve it.

ISCS that had been addressing history and cultural heritage through its activities, publications and variety of products released a series of Dashavtar Cards, which was once a popular form of a play in the regions of Bishnupur and recognized as a admired form of artistry, once again received adulations and remained desired possession when being released in a form of memorabilia from a series on Institute “Reviving India’s Forgotten” by the eminent guest at



the inaugural sessions.

The first academic session titled “Sustainability of Art and Artistry of West Bengal” chaired by Dr. Raja Gopal Dhar Chakroborty, Dean and HoD of South and South east Asian Studies, University of Calcutta over discussion not only identified the challenges but focused on the lacunas triggering hardship on the sector itself. Since the thrash of COVID-19 had restricted our lives, had stalled growth and had oscillated difficult times in the handicraft sector too. But also in parallel had opened up multiple avenues when dearth of economic opportunities had aligned people to adopt creative endeavours and facilitate the sector. Technological harvests and education on diversities to fit the tradition to contemporary framework had not only provoked creativity but a medium to earn revenues and interact with countries and people through art and legacies opulently.

Dr.Sreerupa Roy, Assistant Professor of Economics, Dept. of Economics, Krishnanagar Government College, Nadia, West Bengal) shared that culture was not merely depict values and ethics and societal relations rather it carried with it the local identity of the community and particularly of the artist.Dr. Roy identified that lacuna actually was in the execution of structured policies. She streamlined challenges like finance, difficulty in procurement in materials, infrastructure and promotional deficit being the nexus of dying of handicraft industry in the state and also elsewhere.

Shri Rajesh Sen, Hon'ble Secretary, The Bengal Home Industries, Kolkata advised that . If the Craft Industry had to survive deviation were to be brought in, histories would be touched upon and colossal of opportunities would be given to the makers, designers and marketing hubs.

Dr. Bhaskar Goswami, Associate Professor, Dept. of Economics, University of Burdwan gave more emphasis on developing a sustainable supply chain for the procurement of materials and products itselfthrough vitalizing E-commerce, marketing and most importantly addressing the grievances of the makers who were the actual players of the industry altogether.

The session was summarized by the observer of the session, Mr. Gianluca Rubagotti- who expressed that in Country emphasis is laid and art and culture renaissance had role in bringing and connecting art and culture of handicrafts of said that crafts been explicitly craft itself is a good economic up state itself.



like Italy a lot of down on the beauty the middle age played an important forward evolving regions through immensely. In case West Bengal he of this region has appealing, and the source of livelihood, streaming for the

The second session of the conference titled “West Bengal Handicrafts: linkages and Cultural Diversities” initiated a discussion to highlight the cultural linkages and diversities these crafts had undergone over significant period of time stimulating its global reach through its richness and uniqueness. The Chairperson of the session Ms. KekaSarma, Secretary General, Bharat Chamber of Commerce deliberated that the handicrafts of Bengals was also a symbol of intellectuality, aesthetic and innovative minds. The crafts till date had continued to support the livestock of people associated and also it was a major source of women empowerment especially from the rural background. Policies must be outlined to provide proper infrastructure to store the products. Second is the reach of artisans at the national and international consumers through a digital journey to have exporting huge amounts of indigenous crafts .

Prof. Alope Kumar, Associate Professor, IIM Calcutta, Member Faculty, University of Calcutta, Visiting Lecturer, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir, Belur and Guest Lecturer, National University of Singapore in his speech highlighted that the Government of India had added value to handicrafts that had been displayed at various craft and convention centres worldwide today. The Indian government was focusing on the skills training of rural artisans under the DeenDayal Upadhyaya Grameen KaushalyaYojna, a policy for rural empowerment. In his views Handicraft sector in India not only had a rich and traditional offering for the world but through its array of different training had enhanced the quality of the handicrafts in the world's economic forum. Designers from the National Institute of Design (NID) and National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) had developed courses to up skill Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and individual artisans. Soft skills training programs in export marketing, packaging and technology were being organized. The Incredible India Campaign by the Ministry of Tourism was the biggest example

Ms. KanaklataDatta ,Founder and Fashion Designer at “Shorbori Studio” said that Indian traditional fashion has always been a subject of a revolution unlike western wears which is so quickly adopted. the new generation is again showing interest to revive tradition and hence appealed to make use right use of technology and digital mediums to promote Indigenous crafts, innovation and artisans dexterity a better recognition in coming times.

Prof. Parag Roy, Professor, Dept. of Graphics Printmaking, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata said that using state craft in theme making was a big challenge but also a wider platform to acquaint the global visitors coming during Durga Puja and other festivals with the flavours of beautiful crafts made from simple day to day products.

The Observer – MS. Monica Shie ,Consul for Public Affairs and Director of American Centre said that along with policies and pragmatics equal emphasis would be given to export rationales to elevate the reach of the crafts and garner interest of the global audience towards masterpieces produced with love and toil.

The Valedictory session was addressed by Dr.Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata expressed that the conference had been extremely enriching as it appraised all the participants with history of the crafts and challenges of its creators significantly.

The event along with academic discussion also hosted a small Craft Haat (Craft Exhibition) where various forms of West Bengal's indigenous products were displayed and sold.

Hybrid conference on Post Pandemic opportunities for India's Energy-Security & Mobility Sector

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as a part of its imperatives engages itself to identify and deliberate on concurrent happenings and multiple policy approaches. In support of Gail India, hosted a Hybrid Seminar on "Post Pandemic Opportunities for India's Energy Security and Mobility Sector". As an initiative to try and highlight factors that makes energy –security as a concept extremely complex. Secondly posts challenges towards establishing effective energy supply and security regime. Lastly over discussion with Distinguished Speakers and eminent academicians and researchers tried to address the quest for securing energy supplies collaging foreign security policies for the country to ensure a cantabile energy security frameworks post pandemic times.

The Hybrid seminar held on 31st March 2021 at the Library Hall, ICCR, Kolkata was marked with the inaugural address of Sri. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, India. Who acknowledged that energy – security was a significant subject of academic deliberations and recognized as a corner stone of bilateral regional and global economic affairs of every nation. He stressed on the fact that energy –security issues played a strategic roles in ensuring country's economic, development, prosperity, stability and well being of the people. India was one of the largest growing economies that had witnessed a gradual rise in consumption of energy.

The first academic session on "Energy Security Conflict and Cooperation's" started with the observation of the Chair - Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, who stated that energy is the core factor that has and continues to lead a conflict prone situations impeding life of the people and harmony among the neighbouring countries. He said that 45% of India's energy resource is secured from coal, crude petroleum is 35%, natural gas is only 7%. Thus stress should be laid on procuring energy from renewable resources. According

also important for and development of units that is directly the development of security angles of the policy approach emphasized, though security is rested with protect the energy country but a more policy formats should NITI Ayog reports have

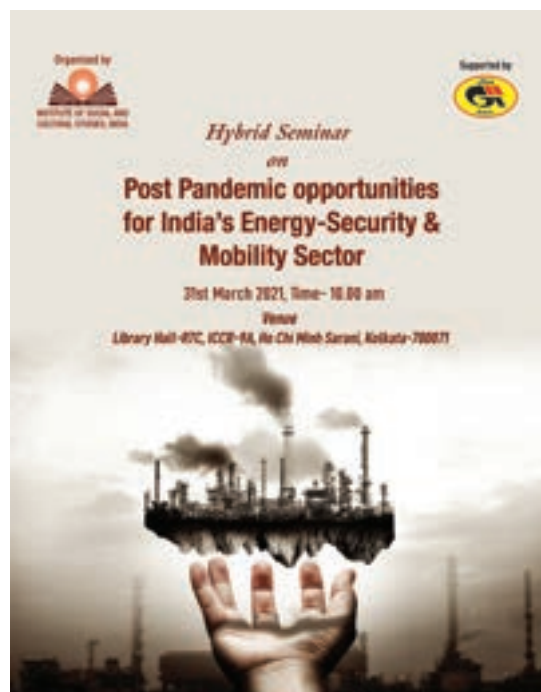


to him energy is the growth manufacturing proportional to the nation. Thus energy through should be Maritime incumbent to resources of the comprehensive be developed, mentioned about

certain target based approach on which importance should be given. Ms. Swati Ganeshan- focussed on areas like impact of climate change on energy factor and ways to approach them in future, options and opportunities in the energy sector, and attempt to redefine energy security aspects and its future goals sustainably. Ms. Ganeshan added that rightfully and skilfully utilization of energy should be the priority along with usage of technology as the usage of fossil fuel cannot be brought down but could be replaced with technology, more of dialogues and symposiums should be initiated with other countries to resolve energy-security oriented disputes and also in finding alternatives to reduce dependency on other countries for acquiring energy in future. Alternatives should be identified and used to reduce carbon emission through infrastructure, manufacturing units, transport sector. Sri Pratim Ranjan Bose shared his views on the persistent arguments coal or nuclear and rested much weight on the utility of nuclear power. His deliberations over examples of incidences and happenings of country's at various times laid impetus on building collaborations to resolve geopolitics, invite investments in the energy-security sector to boost the manufacturing units and stimulate the economy of the country.

The second academic session on “Attaining Sustainable Environment Through Energy Security” started with very interesting statement by the Chair of the session himself who stated that India is now in the best energy scenario and also in a much secured position. His focus remained on elucidating factors like availability, affordability and accessibility in case of energy-security. The Distinguished Speaker of the session Dr. Anindya Bhattacharya- regarded that in case of energy supply and demand goes hand in hand, we can only ensure that the country has a secured energy resource when the cycle of availability, accessibility and affordability is streamlined. On the other hand policies and lacuna in import regulatory policies, trading and usage of advanced technology should be mended to ensure sufficiency of energy and satisfactory energy security in coming times. Like others the speaker emphasised on more dependability of renewable source of energy like solar, but underlined that in case of Solar, proper storage capacity is important thus importance should be laid on developing efficient storage capacity. According to Dr. Bhattacharya to conserve and make energy resource available and affordable to all Government should focus on factors associated with trade, consumer-producer prospective, rural demands, storage facility to overcome climate change and calamities, wealth management and multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral engagements.

The session also facilitated a question answer and discussion session based on the utility of bio-gas and increased utility of other such renewable energy



resources in future.

the third academic session of the Hybrid Seminar ““Ensuring Energy Security Through Reforms” initiated with the opines of the Chair Dr. Lydia Powell who posted questions to other Distinguished panelist about the budget and the energy distribution five year planning, privatization, chances to enhance the manufacturing and consumption of renewable resources , beneficiary policy for manufacturers an stakeholders. Ms. Shebonti RayDadwal- stated that a lot of reforms have been made but an integrative approach is desired in the energy sector to reduce challenges in future to come. Given the situation it is very important to ensure usage of technology, usage of alternative energy than fossil fuels, build investment climate for private sectors, infrastructure, innovation, opportunities, governance and energy diplomacy to make country self-efficient. Dr. Hippu Salk Kristle Nathan- added that an adoption of smarter ways of using energy to be adopted and interestingly than make it available to the rural a reduction of consumption at the urban level are to be focussed to make the energy a sustainable resource for the country.

The Valedictory session was addressed by Sri Shekhar Dutt , Former Governor of Chattisgarh, Former Dy NSA, Former Defence Secretary, Former Secretary Defence Production, Director General of Solar Power Developers Association and Governing Body of Indian Institute of Public Administration who appreciated the views shared by the Distinguished Speakers and applauded the Institute for organizing a discourse on Energy-Security.

International Webinar on Heritage Festival – BIRASAT PARBA- Umcimbi Wamaguggu

ICCR's Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center(SVCC) in Durban is dedicated to strengthen Cultural relations between India and South Africa. ICCR aims to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding & to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people.

September was the Heritage month of South Africa.

ICCR(Durban) in association with Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) India and African Music Project celebrated the cultures and rich heritage of South Africa and India from 22-24 September 2020 with some interesting discussions on the shared heritage and some eclectic performances which showcased the rich culture of both the nations through virtual system.

In the inaugural session the respected guests presented themselves were H.E. Shri V Murulidharan ji, Honourable Minister for state for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, H.E.. Shri Jaideep Sarkar ji, High Commissioner of India in South Africa and Lesotho and H.E. Shri AnishRajan ji, Consul General of India, Durban, Dr. Patricia Opondo, Senior Lecturer, University of KwaZulu, Natal and MMr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India.

In the day 1 programme on discussion titled Heritage of Knowledge – AMAGUGU OLWAZI,

the guest speakers were Prof. SihawuNgubane, University of KwaZulu, Natal, Dr. V. Ananda Reddy, Director, Shri Aurobindo Centre for Advance Research, Puducherry, Dr. Noel Solani, Director, Ditsong Museums of South Africa, Ms. Gugu Mkhize, University of KwaZulu, Natal and Dr. Kanchan Gupta, Chairman, Raja Rammohan Ray Library Foundation (RRRLF), Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The chair of the session had good sum up of the presentations by the speakers on the titled subject.

The day 2 started with the deliberations on the titled theme Heritage of Creativity – AMAGUGU OBUCIKOKWENZA. The guest speakers presented were Prof PitikaNtuli, Sculptor, Poet, Academic, South Africa, Ms. Alakananda Roy, Eminnent Dancer and Social Reformist, India, Dr. Abraham Serote, Director of Social Cohesion, National Department of Art and Culture, South Africa and Dr. Ashwin Mahesh Dalvi, Ex-Chairman, Rajasthan Lalit Kala Academy, India, Faculty, Banasthali and Maharaja Swajirao University, Baroda, India. All the speakers expressed their views and that made the session more charming.

The last day session was on the subject Heritage of Help and Happiness – AMAGUGU EMPILO NNENJABULO to celebrate the heritage of South Africa. Respected speakers in this session were Ven. Swami Atmapriyananda, Pro Chancellor, Ramkrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math, India, Dr. GcinaMhlophe, Executive Director, GCINAMASIKO Art and Heritage Trust, South Africa, Prof. Joy Sen, Principal Investigator, Sandhi Initiative and Varanasi/ Future of Cities Initiative, IIT Kharagpur and Prof. Musa Zulu, Executive Director, Heritage Development Trust, South Africa.

There were cultural programmes in all three days immediately after discussion part was over.

A vote of thanks was given by the organizers at the end.





Institute of Social and Cultural Studies collaborated with Indian Council for Cultural Relations, ICCR Kolkata in 2019 over a series of Discussion as “Coeval Discourse”. The initiative attempts to focus on peremptory consequences that causes an impact on sustainability and development approach widely. The Coeval Discourse in other words is a platform to present, exchange of views and outline strategies to mitigate against challenges and issues causing threat to country and well being of its people. The discourse Involves distinguished speakers, academicians, journalists, govt/non-govt officials and civil society activists from national and international levels. In presence of COVID-19 mandates the Discourse opted for a Digital mode to converse about aspects and matters of concern with its multi-sectoral audience.

Webinar on the Impact of Covid 19 over the Tea industry

Covid 19 has resulted in a devastating impact on India's major industrial sectors, Tea industry being one of them. Tea holds a special place in Indian economy. It is one of the oldest labour intensive industries of the country. The eastern Himalayan region is recognized as the epicenter of the Indian Tea industry as Assam followed by north Bengal for long remain the largest Tea producing region of India.

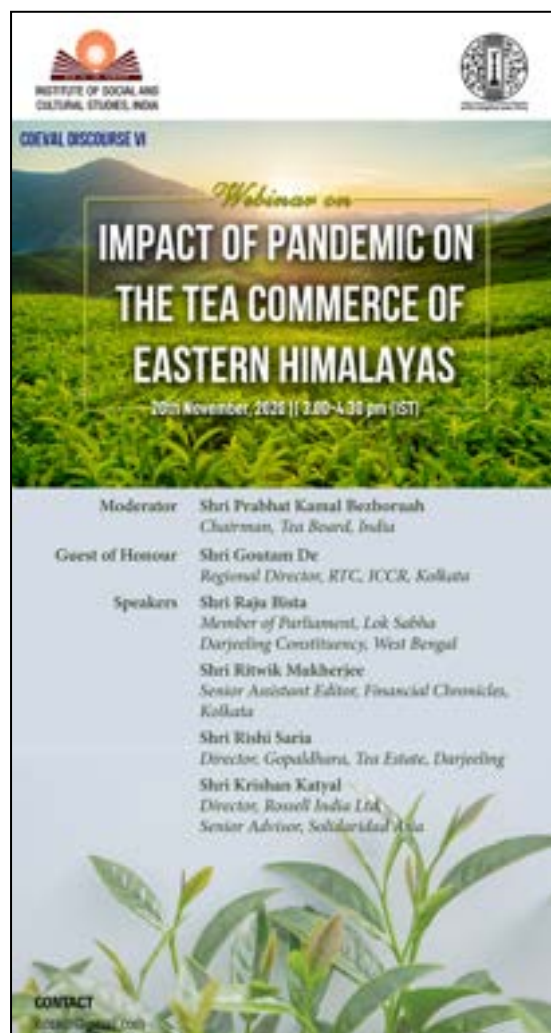
Institute of Social and Cultural studies since the outbreak of the pandemic had carried out a systematic estimation of the impact of Covid 19 over the various avenues of human life through numerous webinars. As a part of that effort on 20th November 2020 it organized a webinar in collaboration with ICCR, Kolkata on the impact of Covid 19 on the tea industry.

The Webinar titled “The Impact of Covid 19 over the Tea industry”, commenced with the inaugural address of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the distinguished speakers invited for the webinar and thereafter requested the Guest of Honour Sri Goutam Dey, Regional Director, RTC, ICCR, Kolkata to make his inaugural address in the webinar. Sri Dey briefly discussed about the challenges posed by the pandemic and how people throughout the world were combating the challenges.

The Moderator of the webinar Shri Prabhat Kamal Bezboruah, Chairman, Tea Board, India in his initial deliberation discussed how the sensitive ecological environment of the eastern Himalayas at present was facing a danger of permanent irreversible destruction. He focused his discourse on the issue of Covid 19 and its impact over the tea industry in this region. He ended his discussion by saying that though the people associated with the tea industry had faced difficulties with the outbreak of the pandemic, yet the intensity of difficulty they had faced was low compared to the people working on the other industrial sectors.

Shri Raju Bista, Member of Parliament Lok Sabha, Darjeeling Constituency, West Bengal, Senior Assistant Editor, Financial Chronicles, Kolkata, portrayed how the epidemic had resulted in decline in production, demand and revenue earning. He also emphasized that tea industry being an important sector where a large section of people specially women folk came from the backward communities used to earn their livelihood and commented that a further crisis in this sector would aggravate the vulnerability for the whole community. He recommended emphasis on the promotion, marketing, research and innovation in Tea industry. He also urged a more active role of the Tea board of India to resolve the hindrances faced by the tea industry. He ended his discussion commenting that tea being more than an industry for this region it was only through a proper planned special package from the government that this industrial sector could be revived back.

Sri Ritwik Mukherjee. The distinguished speaker in his deliberation narrated how the tea producers were seriously affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. The speaker in his presentation briefly narrated the steps taken by the state government in this regard. The prolong lockdown due to the



pandemic made the tea industry from this sector had started relying on the e-commerce platform. The distinguished speaker at the end of his presentation addressed this issue and explained the importance of e-commerce platform for the tea industry.

Shri Rishi Saria , Director , Gopaldhara, Tea Estate , Darjeeling very methodically presented how the nationwide lock down disrupted the plucking process in the tea gardens and why it had become a herculean task to bring back normal production in the tea gardens. He identified stagnant tea price , lack of demand in the domestic market due to the outbreak of pandemic and high rate of air fare for the export of tea as the major reasons triggering the crisis in the tea industry .He ended his discussion by urging that a meaningful and rational plan were necessary to help the tea industry to come out this crisis.

Shri Krishan Katyal, Director , Rossel I India Ltd, Senior Advisor , Solidaridad Asia meaningfully analyzed how the ongoing pandemic had resulted in a huge crop loss leading to a reduction in tea production. The distinguished speaker at the end of his discussion addressed this problem and analyzed how it could overcome this crisis in the long run.

The distinguished moderator summed up the presentation by saying that Tea Board of India had long been engaged in the upliftment of the Tea industry of India and how they were working to emancipate the Tea industry from the multifarious crisis it was facing.

He thereafter opened the session for questions and comment from the audience. Few questions came up regarding the economic crisis and wage rate related problems. These questions were adequately answered by the distinguished speakers of the Webinar.

The Webinar came to an end with the vote of thanks from Arindam Mukherjee, Director Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Coeval Discourse VI International Webinar on "60 years of Indus Water Treaty: An Overview"

Since time immemorial trans- boundary water disputes have been a part of human civilization , such disputes have seen both conflict and cooperation.

The Indus river originates in the Tibetan plateau and thereafter along with its tributaries flows southwards crossing Khyber Pakhtunkhawa, Punjab and Sindh provinces finally drains into the Arabian Sea. The river basin is divided amongst Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and China.

The dispute of Indus water began long before India got partitioned. After the partition of Indian subcontinent and creation of Pakistan, the Indus water dispute transformed into an international dispute because the British drew the political boundary between the two countries crossing the Indus Basin , leaving India the upstream and Pakistan the downstream riparian of the five rivers in the Indus system.

However differences arose between the two nations regarding the interpretation of the agreement which ultimately resulted in Pakistan's formal denouncement of the agreement in 1950.

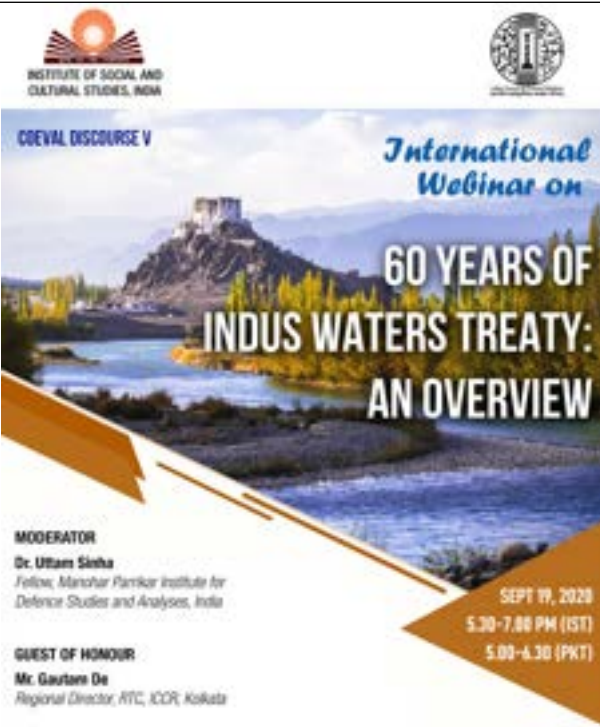
Much had changed since The Indus Water Treaty of 1960 was signed. Though the revision of the accord seems to be a necessity, yet co-operation between Pakistan and India regarding rivers water is severely limited due to the history of rivalry, trust deficit, policy priority by leadership and lack of institutional dialogue and compromise.

After the terrorist attack in Uri, hydro politics between India and Pakistan got further complicated as Indian government decided to suspend all bilateral talks on Indus water dispute and formed an inter ministerial taskforce to review the accord and clearly exhibited its intention to maximize the utilization of the water flowing through the western tributaries of Indus by building dams, canals and reservoir.

In the context of this present complicated hydro-political scenario between India and Pakistan, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Indus Water Treaty organized a webinar titled "60 Years of Indus Water Treaty: An Overview" in association with ICCR held on September 19, 2020. The guest of honour for this webinar Sri Goutam Dey, regional director RTC ICCR, in his introductory note termed the Indus Water treaty a successful example of peaceful conflict resolution and hoped that both India and Pakistan would resolve their other outstanding bilateral dispute in a similar manner.

The moderator of the webinar Dr. Uttam Sinha, Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, in his opening deliberation discussed briefly about the history and the provision of the treaty and raised a fundamental question of whether contentious politics between the two nations would have an impact over the sustainability of the treaty in the near future.

Dr. Dharam Vir Thareja, Former Commissioner, Central Water Commission, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water resources, Government of India, in his presentation by analyzing several provisions of the Indus Water Treaty explained



INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

COEVAL DISCOURSE V

International Webinar on

60 YEARS OF INDUS WATERS TREATY: AN OVERVIEW

MODERATOR
Dr. Uttam Sinha
Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, India

GUEST OF HONOUR
Mr. Goutam Dey
Regional Director, RTC, ICCR, Kolkata

SPEAKERS
Dr. Arvind Gupta
Director, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, India
Dr. Dharam Vir Thareja
Former Commissioner, Central Water Commission, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, GOI
Dr. Rashid Aftab
Director, Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan
Prof. Shakil Ahmad Ranshoo
Professor and Dean for Research, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India
Mr. Sanjay Gupta
Strategy & Policy Advisor (Consultant), South and Central Asia, World Bank, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Asian Development Bank

SEPT 19, 2020
5.30-7.00 PM (IST)
5.00-6.30 (PKT)

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why still Indus water distribution remained a major contentious issue between India and Pakistan. He revealed how lack of wider wisdom between both India and Pakistan created hindrance towards a successful resolution of the Indus water dispute by citing the example of the dispute that arose during the construction of the Salal Dam, Baglihar and Kishenganga hydro project.

Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Professor and Dean for Research, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India, in his deliberation stated that at present the much-acclaimed water treaty lacked the ability to deal with new emerging issues like climate change, environmental flows and over exploitation of uses of groundwater. He opined that global warming had led in the depletion of glaciers resulting in the diminution of water supply in the Indus and its tributary rivers. The gradual reduction in the flow of river water over several years created an environment of misunderstanding between the neighbouring countries. His presentation came up with a number of recommendations, one of them being the need to initiate a joint endeavor to understand the root cause of water depletion. He also stressed the necessity of creating an effective mechanism for the exchange of water data between the two countries.

Dr. Rashid Aftab, Director, Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan, in his deliberation projecting the Indus Water Dispute as a multinational issue pointed out the limitation of the treaty to cope up with the changing situation and stressed the necessity to perceive the socio-economic, political factors related with the Indus water dispute meaningfully. He added that a joint institution for mutual cooperation would be set up to understand such dispute and suggested that both the countries by following the principle of water rationality, efficient basin management and effective sharing of water data could resolve the longstanding water dispute.

Mr. Sanjay Gupta, Strategy & Policy advisor Consultant, South and Central Asia, World Bank, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Asian Development Bank analyzed how the socio economic and ecological aspects of the region remained unaddressed in this treaty. He opined that the amendment of the accord would be based on sound scientific knowledge and must be conducted in a politically conducive environment.

Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, India opined that the present politically hostile environment between the two nations would ultimately pave the way for the abrogation of the accord.

The moderator of the programme opened the session for the audience and requested them to raise their questions and opinion over the issue. During the questioner session, several important questions were asked regarding various aspects of Indus water treaty and the distinguished panellists adequately replied them.

The Webinar ended with the vote of thanks from Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.



CONNECT TO RECONNECT

Introduction- In alliance with Ministry of External Affairs, Branch Secretariat office, Kolkata. Institute designed a series of Disquisition on “Connect to Reconnect” to touch upon the nations connectivity with its adjoining countries also focussing on its subsequent developments. Discussing and addressing measures to mobilize the fossil routes that can captivate connectivity and contribute to growth trajectory in future. The given programme intended to receive participation of multi-sectoral audience as well as ideas of the Hon’ble Ambassadors and High Commissioners of different neighbouring nations.

Connect to Reconnect (Series I)

International Webinar on India – Myanmar Convergence

The International Webinar series titled “Connecting to Reconnect”, Chapter 1, on India-Myanmar Convergence duly collaborated with Economic Diplomacy & State Division Ministry of External Affairs, GOI commenced on 7 August , 2020 with the inaugural address of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the distinguished speakers invited for the webinar .

The Moderator Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System, New Delhi, in his inaugural address, commented that both India and Myanmar had undertaken several positive efforts to enhance their bilateral relationship into a new height. He pointed out how India and Myanmar were working closely towards achieving sustainable development. He concluded by saying that Myanmar is very important in respect to India's Look East and Act East Policy and therefore it was necessary for India to build a more comprehensive relation with its eastern neighbour.

H.E, U Moe Kyaw Aung, Ambassador of Myanmar to India in his presentation spoke about the deep relationship that both the countries had enjoyed since past. He said that since both India and Myanmar enjoyed a common cultural tradition, the two countries were cooperating each other to restore and conserve that common cultural past. Two countries had not only taken effort to revive their common cultural past but also tried to develop the present cultural engagement through initiatives like exchange of cultural troops between the two countries. He also pointed out how both the countries were working together on the issue of border trade, connectivity and infrastructure development.

Mr. Saurav Kumar, Ambassador of India to Myanmar initiated a positive note by identifying Myanmar as an extremely welcoming country. He emphasised the necessity of more people to people connectivity between India and Myanmar which he believed would further consolidate this relationship.

Dr. Anita Prakash, Director Policy Relations, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta, Indonesia, started her discussion by commenting that India and Myanmar shared a deep bilateral relationship which had a lot of potentiality. She analyzed in detail the issue of the ongoing Trilateral Highway project between India, Thailand and Myanmar and commented that successful implementation of such project would alleviate prosperity across the borders of both the countries resulting in narrowing development gap. She concluded by saying that physical, institutional, and regulatory convergence, together connection with civil society would be the key to repurposed relations.

Mr. Ba Hla Aye, Member of Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (Myanmar ISIS) focused his discussion over the historical aspects of the Indo- Myanmar relationship. He discussed the cultural and religious proximity between India and Myanmar and how such proximity could be used to further develop the bilateral relationship between the

The poster is for an international webinar titled "International Webinar on Connect to Reconnect Chapter: I" with a focus on "INDIA-MYANMAR CONVERGENCE". It is organized by the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India, in association with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and the Ministry of External Affairs, Myanmar. The event is scheduled for August 7, 2020 (Friday), from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM IST / 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM MT. The moderator is Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System (RIS), New Delhi. The speakers are H.E. U Moe Kyaw Aung, Hon'ble Ambassador of Myanmar to India; H. E. Sri Saurabh Kumar, Hon'ble Ambassador of India to Myanmar; Dr. Anita Prakash, Director Policy Relations, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta, Indonesia; and Mr. U Ba Hla Aye, Member, Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS), Myanmar and Former DCM of Myanmar to India. The contact information is provided at the bottom left, and the names of the speakers are listed on the right.

Organized by
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

In association with
Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India
Ministry of External Affairs
Branch Secretariat, Kolkata

*International Webinar on
Connect to Reconnect
Chapter: I*

**INDIA-MYANMAR
CONVERGENCE**

AUGUST 7, 2020 (FRIDAY)
2:30- 4:00 PM (IST) / 3:30- 5:00 (MMT)

MODERATOR
Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi
Director General, Research and Information System (RIS), New Delhi

SPEAKERS
H.E. U Moe Kyaw Aung
Hon'ble Ambassador of Myanmar to India
H. E. Sri Saurabh Kumar
Hon'ble Ambassador of India to Myanmar
Dr. Anita Prakash
Director Policy Relations, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta, Indonesia
Mr. U Ba Hla Aye
Member, Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS), Myanmar and Former DCM of Myanmar to India
Mr. Pratim Ranjan Bose
Researcher and Former Deputy Editor, Hindu Business Line

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two countries.

Mr. PratimRanjan Bose, researcher and eminent columnist concentrated his presentation over the economic aspects of the Indo- Myanmar relation. He said that though Myanmar at present was one of the fastest growing region of the world, yet regarding the subject of trade India had gradually lost its ground in Myanmar. He suggested that India would develop new effective policies to remove these barriers to effect a more cooperative and inclusive relation with Myanmar.

During the questioner session, several important questions were asked regarding various aspects of India- Myanmar relations and the distinguished panellist adequately replied them.

The webinar concluded with the vote of thanks from KankanaRoy, on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Connect to Reconnect (Series II)

International Webinar on India – Maldives Enroutings

Neighbourhood has always been an important aspect of Indian foreign policy. Initiation of the “Neighbourhood First Policy” by present Indian government manifests its keenness towards this matter. Comprehending the significance of this newly adopted policy Institute of Social and Cultural Studies have started a series of webinar disquisitions on “Connect to Reconnect” with Ministry of External Affairs(MEA), Branch Secretariat office, Kolkata addressing India’s relationship with its immediate neighbourhood. The second chapter of the series titled “India – Maldives Enroutings” took place on 9th October 2020.

The webinar commenced with the introductory note of Kankana Roy of ISCS, who narrated the objective of the present series of webinar and thereafter requested the moderator to initiate the programme .

The moderator, Sri Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay opened the webinar by providing an overview of the Indo- Maldivian relationship. Terming Maldives as one of the smallest Islamic democracy of the world he narrated the deep bilateral connection that both the countries shared since past. He added that though occasional disputation rose between the two countries in past, yet their bilateral relationship had largely been peaceful and cordial in nature. Speaking on the history of the bilateral ties he mentioned how India was one of the first few countries which recognized Maldives as an independent nation in 1966. During COVID-19 pandemic, India had made sure supply lines for essential food and construction materials continue to the Maldives. It also gifted 580 tons of essential food items through Mission SAGAR. He therefore added that the ongoing pandemic had brought the two countries even closer with India increasingly helping Maldives to tackle the Covid crisis effectively.

Mr. Sanjay Sudir, Honourable Indian high commissioner to Maldives in his presentation focused on

the issue of connectivity. While discussing the modes of connectivity he in detail explained how both India and Maldives were working closely to build up the sea connectivity by initiating sea cargo ferry between the two countries that would connect Kochi to Male port via Kulhudhuffushi port in North Maldives. He thereafter focused his discussion on the activities that promoted connectivity like tourism, labour movement, trade and cultural activities. He ended his discussion reiterating the importance of connectivity in bilateral relation and hoped the present endeavor to develop the connectivity would continue in future.

Dr. Rasheeda Mohamed Didi, Member, Higher Education Council, Govt. of Maldives, In her deliberation made a brief statistical presentation on the growth of Indian tourists in Maldives. She discussed several push and pull factors behind this rise of Indian tourists in this island nation. She drew attention towards the several initiatives taken by both India and Maldives like developing sea transport system, air travel bubble that had helped in the rise of Indian tourists in Maldives. She also opined that the necessity for the tourists of both the nations was to have a strong desire to explore each other's country. She believed that without generating the desire to explore, development of cultural connectivity would be unattainable.

Vice Admiral (Retd) Shekhar Sinha, explained the political and security aspects of the Indo- Maldives bilateral relations. He emphasized the need of closer defense cooperation with Maldives and hoped that under the new Maldivian regime the bilateral relationship between the two countries especially in the field of defence and infrastructure would grow into a new height.

Mr. Iyaz J Naseem, Executive Board Member of Divehi Language Academy of Government of Maldives focused over the issue of ethno- linguistic and cultural connectivity between the two nations. In his discourse a plethora of issues associated with Maldives related with India came up, such as the strong association of Maldivian language with the Indian language family, similar idol worship in both ancient India and Maldives, identical form of matriarchal society in both Maldives and South India, and physical familiarity between the people of both the countries. Mr. Naseem briefly stated the problem of growing Islamic radicalization in Maldives and opined that if the Maldivians would receive Islamic studies from Islamic institutions in India, they would surely be less enticed towards the forces of Islamic radicalization which would help the island nation to mitigate the growing environment of religious fundamentalism.

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In association with
Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

International Webinar on
Connect to Reconnect
Chapter: II

INDIA-MALDIVES ENROUTINGS

OCTOBER 9, 2020 (FRIDAY)
5:30-6:30 PM (IST) / 4:30-5:30 PM (MVT)

MODERATOR
Amb (Retd) Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay
Former High Commissioner of India to Maldives,
Member, National Human Rights Commission, India

SPEAKERS
H.E. Mr. Sunjay Sudhir
High Commissioner of India to Maldives
Dr. Rasheeda Mohamed Didi
Member, Higher Education Council, Govt. of Maldives
Independent Academic and Resource Person
Vice Admiral (Retd) Shekhar Sinha
Former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff &
Former Commander in Chief, Western Naval Command, India
Mr. Iyaz J Naseem
Executive Board Member of Divehi Language Academy,
Govt. of Maldives

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After the end of the deliberation the moderator opened the session for the audience and requested them to raise their questions, views over the issue. During the questioner session, several important questions were asked regarding various aspects of India- Maldives relations and the distinguished panelists adequately replied them.

The webinar came to an end with the vote of thanks given by Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Connect to Reconnect (Series III)

International Webinar on Indo- Bhutan Connectedness

The smaller states surrounding India are important factors in the preservation and development of national interests. By virtue of their geographical proximity to India's borders they are strategically important to India's security. Acknowledging this fact the present Indian government has initiated its neighbourhood first policy programme aiming to maintain a close and cordial relationship with its neighbours.

Keeping coherence with this new diplomatic initiative of the government, Institute of Social and Cultural studies in its effort to methodically elucidate the various dynamics of India's relationship with its neighbouring countries initiated a series of webinar titled "Connecting to Reconnect" together with Ministry of External Affairs (Branch Secretariat) Kolkata.

The third webinar on 6th November,2020 focused on the Indo- Bhutan Connectedness, commenced with the inaugural address of Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she herself introduced the distinguished speakers invited for the webinar and thereafter requested the moderator of the Webinar Mr.Pawan Verma to conduct the session.

Ambassador Pawan Verma , former Ambassador of India to Bhutan in his introductory note provided an overview of the essence and strength of Indo- Bhutan

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

In association with
Ministry of External Affairs
Branch Secretariat, Kolkata

International Webinar on
Connect to Reconnect
Chapter: III
**INDO-BHUTAN
CONNECTEDNESS**

NOVEMBER 6, 2020 (FRIDAY)
5-6:30 PM (IST)/ 5:30-7:00 PM (BTT)

Coordinator: Amb. (Retd.) Pawan K. Verma
Former Ambassador India to Bhutan

Speakers: H. E. Major General Vetsop Nangyel
Ambassador of Bhutan to India
H.E. Mr. Rachira Kamboj
Ambassador of India to Bhutan
Mr. Chhewang Rinzin
Managing Director, Drak Green Power Corporation Ltd., Bhutan
Mr. Karma Ura
President, Center for Bhutan & GNH
(Gross National Happiness) Studies, Bhutan
Mr. Soumya Chattopadhyay
Senior Programs officer, India Resident Mission,
Asian Development Bank, New Delhi, India

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cooperation.

Major General Vestop Namgyal, Ambassador of Bhutan to India narrated the role played by India in developing the physical infrastructure of Bhutan which according to him helped the Bhutanese population immensely. He pointed out how both the countries were working together in building an effective framework of digital connectivity. Subsequently he discussed the commercial connectivity between India and Bhutan and narrated how India as the largest trading partner of Bhutan was helping the Himalayan kingdom to attain its economic prosperity. He emphasized over the key issue of people to people connectivity of both the countries. He classified this connectivity into two classes, one official people to people connectivity under which Bhutanese civil, military and police personals received training in Indian institutes. On the other hand under the unofficial people to people connectivity where the Bhutanese students came to India to enroll themselves in different universities and institutions and also paid visit to the numerous holy Buddhist shrines located in India. He commented that such connectivity would help the Bhutanese people to understand India and to further solidify the bilateral relationship. He put forward the supportive role played by India to minimise the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and applauded the role played by the Indian leadership in helping Bhutan to overcome this crisis.

Ms RuchiraKhamboj, Honourable, Indian ambassador to Bhutan mentioned the significance of the recent fourteen high level bilateral political and diplomatic visits between the two countries and the signing of eighty one important memorandums of understandings. She said that Bhutan had always been a foreign policy priority for India and that was exhibited when Prime Minister Narendra Modi after coming into power made his first official foreign visit to Bhutan. The speaker in her presentation analysed the growing India - Bhutan digital cooperation specially mentioning how India was helping Bhutan to harness the service of the South Asia Satellite. The speaker discussed the hydropower cooperation between India and Bhutan and analysed how such cooperation could help India in securing a reliable source of inexpensive and clean electricity in one hand and generating revenue for Bhutan by exporting this energy on the other thereby cementing the economic integration of both the countries. The speaker said that due to the cultural resemblance and realising the great potential of tourism as the driver of socio- economic development both India and Bhutan maintained an open border so that the tourist from two countries could move freely with minimum identification documents. The distinguished speaker in her address accounted the medical assistance provided by India to Bhutan to combat this grave health crisis. She ended her discussion on a high note stating that the relationship between India and Bhutan had always been a special one and would be a foreign policy priority for India in the years to come.

Mr.ChhewangRinzin, Managing Director, Druk Green Power Corporation limited focused on the bilateral hydro power cooperation between India and Bhutan. He stated that though the global pandemic did not have any impact on the existing hydro energy generation in Bhutan it was adversely affecting the construction of new hydro power projects. He ended his presentation by stating that hydro power sector was crucial to Bhutan's economy and added that through hydropower cooperation, Bhutan could

help India in achieving its mission of producing clean and renewable energy.

Mr Karma Ura, President , Centre for Bhutan GNH(Gross National Happiness Studies) Bhutan themed his deliberation on the economic relation between India and Bhutan. He initiated his discourse by stating the close relationship between India and Bhutan and pointed out the necessity to determine different avenues to develop this relationship to a new height. Acknowledging Bhutan's trade dependence on India he opined that the Himalayan kingdom could achieve sustainable growth targets if India took initiative to ease its border trade with Bhutan by establishing more entry and exit trading points along the border. At the end of his discussion he raised the issue of Good and Service Tax (GST) introduced by the Indian government and narrated how it had an adverse effect on several industrial sectors of Bhutan.

Mr Soumya Chattopadhyay, Senior Programs officer, Indian Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank, New Delhi, India had his presentation centred round the role of Asian Development Bank in the economic development of Bhutan. In his initial deliberation the speaker stated how the Asian Development Bank as one of the largest multilateral development partners of Bhutan was providing the tiny Himalayan kingdom with technical support and financial assistance in the field of energy production, transport connectivity, water and urban infrastructure service, health service, skill development initiatives , education and regional integration and cooperation. He narrated the role played by the Asian Development Bank in expanding the rural electrification projects in Bhutan. The speaker also addressed a key issue of how through the South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation programme, Asian Development Bank was helping Bhutan to enhance connectivity, transit facilities , logistics and trade facilitation to promote cross – border trade. At the end of his discussion Mr. Chattopadhyay acknowledging the pivotal role of India as the largest developmental partner of Bhutan meaningfully commented the Asian Development Bank would effectively support and complement India's initiative in this regard.

During the question ere session several questions relating to Indo- Bhutan power cooperation and implication of Goods and Service Tax (GST) on bilateral trade came up. These questions were adequately answered by the distinguished speakers.

The moderator, Ambassador Pawan Verma in his concluding speech stated that trust and empathy were the foundation of Indo- Bhutan relationship. He said that such trust and empathy among both the countries would be able to solve any friction that would arise in future. He said India- Bhutan relationship was an outstanding example of harmonious existence of two close neighbours and urged that such relationship would be nurtured by a continuous use of commitment.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks from Arindam Mukherjee, Director of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.



A. Religio-Cultural survey of fifty-one Shakti-Peethas

In 2019 (February) the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) was entrusted by the India Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture, GOI to carry out a religio-cultural survey of fifty-one shakti-peethas. The time was limited and the base data available were scanty. The objectives to carry out the survey was to physically document the present status of shakti-peethas, compilation of extant information base and to map the religio-cultural evolution and expansion of the network of fifty-one Shakti peethas across the Indian subcontinent on the basis of a textual study of the various narratives from the ancient and early medieval times down till contemporary times.

The field survey covered areas of Indian sub-continent where the particular locations of shakti-peethas are distributed (includes specific sites in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka). A team of professionals from ISCS visited the shakti-peetha sites and generated primary and secondary data, as far as practicable. Collection of secondary data was also done through extensive literature survey that involved library visits and internet-searching. After the field survey, the updated data generated from field were matched and clubbed with the secondary data gathered from literature survey and finally compiled into a report. The complete report accompanied by a well formulated 'Strategy and Action Plan' was submitted to the IGNCA in the month of August 2021.

B. “Impact of Covid- 19 on Indo- Bangladesh Border Trade through ICPs at Petrapole and Agartala”(Ongoing)

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies(ISCS),India in collaboration with the Research and Information System For Developing Countries(RISD,New Delhi designed a survey based project with an objective to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on Indo- Bangladesh Border Trade through ICPs at Petrapole and Agartala. Moreover also analyse : environmental uncertainties, define pattern, direction and participation in trade by different stake holders.

To examine the perception of people who are involved in import-exports and labourers in dealing with problems associated with cross border trade during COVID-19. To estimate the value of exports and imports during COVID-19 and to compare with the pre-Covid 19 situations. To evaluate the border haats in Tripura and whether corona virus made any impact on the pattern, direction and participation in trade by different stake holders. Lastly to suggest the ways of proper managing of trade to overcome the negative effects of bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh

The study is been conducted at the ICPs at Patrapole and land custom stations at Ghajadanga in West Bengal and Agartala in Tripura



Report of Deepavali Sandhya 2020

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India in collaboration with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on the auspicious occasion of Deepavali Sandhya captivated Kolkata music lovers with the century old chords of Indian notation.

After being an onlooker of virtual concerts for certain months, Kolkata on 21st November at the Satyajit Ray auditorium of ICCR, remained live witness to the mesmerizing Juglabandhi by eminent Hindustani Classical violinist Ustad Johar Ali Khan of Rampur Gharana and the Sitar Maestro Pandit Partha Bose accompanied by Asif Ali Khan on Tabla over Raaga Jog, Bhairavi and several others compositions.

The melody of string instruments manifested a synthesis of Indian culture, traditions that till date remains affirm on native grounds testing boundaries of space and time to attain a universal approach. The initiative was adored by all the spectators including the chief guest- Tofique Hasan-Hon'ble Deputy Commissioner of Bangladesh to Kolkata and other Distinguished Dignitaries- Sri. Arup Kumar Saha- Head of Branch Secretariat (MEA), Kolkata. Dr. Asim Pada Chakroborty –Chairman ISCS and Sri. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, India.



The resplendent evening that managed to bring together admirers of music for a rich symphony of Indian Classical abiding COVID-19 guidelines was considered a vital step ushering back to normalcy yet again!



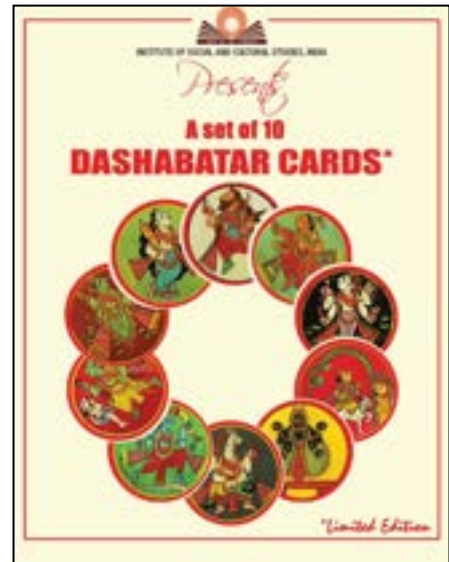
Bi-Monthly Bulletin

In the midst of COVID-19 shadow, ISCS, continued to reciprocates with its enthusiastic readers on corsage of ideas and perspectives through its Bi-Monthly-News Reel Volumes. Altogether the focus of this years editions remained on analysing how India intends to outshine China over COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy at one hand, while one the other building multilateral allies with its neighbouring countries especially Bangladesh-the nation that completes its 50 years of Liberation withstanding altercations and political internecine. The rearward sections of the bulletin as usual gets its readers a sight of the institute's continuous attempts of addressing history, religion, contemporary while reckoning bravery that keeps inspiring the country and its youth even today through national and international activities and initiatives.



Memorabilia's

DASHAVATAR TASH – The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that over a decade had tried to address layers of history along with contemporary happenings makes an attempt to reintroduce the lost centuries old card game Dashavatartash, the forgotten masterpiece, from the deep red earth of Bishnupur, West Bengal. Though the resonance of pleasure in shuffling the Dashavatartash is now only recalled over tales and the chef d'oeuvre finds a lonely place in the collector's archive, resisting ignorance and fear of extinction, the Institute as a part of its series of Memorabilia on "Reviving India's Forgotten" has taken the initiative to showcase these specially to art lovers and the connoisseurs who can keep the traditional art alive. The combination of devotional approach, the sense of art in preparing the cards and the intelligence applied to play the game denote what a sophisticated culture Bengal had and the height of mentation involved even in the game in the then period.



Upcoming Publications:

In the year 2021-22, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies is going to undertake the publication of a series of book addressing diverse issues.

1. Muslim Politics in Bengal: Legislative Perspective VOL 3

Edited by Snehangshu Bhattacharjee "Muslim Politics in Bengal: Legislative Perspective" VOL 3 is the third volume of a five volume series compilation of the deliberation that took place in the Bengal Legislative Assembly in-between 1937-47. This book evaluates the Muslim politics of undivided Bengal between the periods of 1937-47 from a legislative perspective since these ten years preceding partition had been pivotal in shaping the politics of the entire subcontinent.

2. Purba Pakistaner Rajnotik Cartoon: Jugantor Patrika (1947-1971)

Edited by Snehangshu Bhattacharjee "Purba Pakistaner Rajnotik Cartoon: Jugantor Patrika (1947-1971)" is a compilation of political cartoons that were published in the Bengali daily Jugantor Patrika in-between 1947-71. This book by meaningfully analyzing these political cartoons unfolds several issues that triggered the liberation movement of Bangladesh.

3. Revolt: Panchanan Chakraborty

Since its inception ISCS had carried out intensive research activities over various aspects of the anti-

British revolutionary movement in India. As a part of this endeavor Institute is going to republish the book “Revolt” written by eminent Indian revolutionary Panchanan Chakraborty that explains the saga of the revolutionary endeavors in Bengal during the colonial period.

4. Brahmodesh: Bireswar Ganguly

The book “Brahmodesh” edited by Arindam Mukherjee is a compilation of articles published in the Bengali periodicals during the colonial period authored by Bireswar Ganguly. The compiled articles in this book throw lights on various aspects of the Burmese life as seen by Shri Ganguly during his stay in Burma.

5. Slavery in British Dominion: Dwarakanath Ganguly

Dwarakanath Ganguly, a prominent nationalist and social reformer from Calcutta during the colonial era, wrote several articles in the nationalist newspapers like Sanjibani and Bengalee depicting the terrible work and living condition of the plantation labour in Assam. “Slavery in British Dominion” consists several articles written by Dwarakanath Ganguly on the plantation labour which were published in the newspaper The Bengalee between September 1886 - April 1887. ISCS is reprinting this valuable book that throws light on the life and activities of the plantation labours in India.

6. Trial: Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a pivotal role in the freedom movement of India. This book published in 1908 is a compilation of the proceedings records associated with the trial of Lokomanya Tilak for the offence of sedition at the Third Criminal Sessions of the High Court of Bombay from 13th to 22nd July 1908. ISCS intend to publish this book under its Trial series to enable the readers to understand the narratives of the legal struggles undergone by the nationalist leaders of India during the British rule.

7. Ethnic Fissures and State Responses of Pakistan: An Overview

“Ethnic Fissures and State Responses of Pakistan: An Overview” edited by Rana Banerjee narrates the brutal suppression on behalf of the Pakistani government and its armed forces against the growing discontent among the several ethnic groups of Pakistan. This valuable book comprises the narratives of various prominent ethnic leaders and political activists of Pakistan highlighting how the rights of the ethnic groups are quelled by the Pakistani administration.

ISCS: Way Forward

The Institute in year 2020-2021 along with various initiatives and documentation has managed to engage The Research and Information System For Developing Countries(RIS) and School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, University of Mumbai as its partners to conduct future research,national and international discourse,joint documentation and academic course work.

- Institute in coming years as a part of academic programmes would like to initiate academic course work,short term programmes on research methodology,internship opportunities in order to encourage and involve young scholars and students on Asia matters and governance.
- Institute also would like to initiate another chapter on Purvodaya – that through Bi-lingual forms of documentations,sets of web based discussions,symposiums and national and international conclaves would like to seek a corridor of engagement for policy makers,researchers and wider interdisciplinary participants to discuss,disseminate ideas,explore myriad of issues and facilitate constructive policy designing towards a transformation and development of eastern India.
- Institute also would like to stress on rolling out variety of bulletins and yearly digests on Indology,Indo-Bangladesh relations and International affairs in Bi-lingual format. To inform about policy ,governance and multiple initiatives undertaken by government in regional languages.
- Institute along with documentataion, research and publication would try to become proactive and more communicative through digital mediums and social networking group in order to transpire about its initiatives and canvas of activities to wider audience.



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