



Institute of Social and Cultural Studies

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



Annual Report

2021-2022



**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA**

C O N T E N T S

Director's Desk	5
Bangladesh Studies	7
Indian Ocean Resource Centre	15
Purvodaya	25
Freedom Struggle Studies	35
Connect to Reconnect	55
Coeval Discourse	69
Events and Activities	73
Book Fair	91
Internship Programme	95
Publications	99
Press and Media Coverages	105



DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that marked its 10th anniversary in 2021 with its Eastern India base camp and prominent neighbours like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar, continues to engage itself in the debate and study of identifying India's role towards neighbourhood and a wider regional and global environment.

Like past decades, the institute in 2021-22, through its versatile study units, research resource and administrative structure continued to tantamount efforts to project precincts of power, culture and governance through chronicles and contemporaries for institute's wide-reaching global audience, partners and networks.

Institute's chapter on Bangladesh Studies remained immersed towards observing the golden jubilee of country's first neighbour Bangladesh. The underlined activities, publications, virtual discourses tried to interpret the epilogues of Indo-Bangladesh shared struggle of 1971. Along with bilateral ties and multimodal initiatives adopted by India & Bangladesh, the two neighbouring countries attempt to anchor mutual interest, fortify cultural convergence, resolve geo-political dilemma and drive people to people connect through tourism, economy, trade and inter-country investments also through e-commerce.

Institute's another chapter, the Indian Ocean Resource Centre(IORC) remained perennial towards hosting its annual dialogue on security challenges and economic prospects. The international event evaluated India's concerns on Indo-Pacific disputes and also charted a way forward for a wider bilateral engagement between India and RIM countries.

One of the priorities of the institute remained on connectivity and its developmental gains. Connectivity has emerged as one of the crucial pillars for the country's foreign policy and has been acting as a sustainable corridor for trade, commerce, movement of people, discarding shibboleths of the past. Therefore, Institute's series on 'Connect to Reconnect', International Symposium on BIMSTEC with The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and a significant virtual discussion on BBIN that creatively engaged diplomats, notable researchers, cross country stakeholders and research forums to recount on post-pandemic growth momentum, cyber security and most importantly transpire how BIMSTEC, BBIN as a policy system foregrounds the development

of country's eastern frontiers. The initiatives probe into an enquiry how, through connectivity, currency exchanges, vaccine Maitri and inter-cultural representations, India is trying to break its straightjacket proclivity of remaining confined to South Asia's tradition intending to leverage its Bay of Bengal identity to link up with wider South East Asia.

The ISCS & ICCR collaborative series of talks on 'Coeval Discourse' remained constant as a platform to involve young research teams to discuss and disseminate their ideas towards contemporary issues, lifestyle and adaptability practices with shifting variants of COVID-19.

Even today, the East Indian belt is strategically positioned with three international partitions namely Bangladesh in the east, Nepal in the West and Bhutan in the north east. It is treated as a corridor of engagement by international investors, visitors and preferred land of settlement for diasporas from the adjoining neighbours who use the region, which has been the terrain of natural wealth, intelligentsia and human resource as their main lobby to transcend their approach and reach to various firmament of the region especially to the states like Eastern UP, West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh. In order to become a gainer as well as contributor in fields like education, health, IT, jute, leather, textile, agriculture, spices, metals as well as minerals. Therefore, in order to focus and feature how the Govt. of India's drive of 'Mission Purvodaya' in 2020 is making an attempt to turn Eastern India as a self-reliant passive market and an active manufacturing hub. A complete Chapter on 'Purvodaya' and a significant (English/Odia) Bi-Monthly was launched in November, 2021 by ISCS.

The Institute's chapter on Freedom Struggle Studies (FSS), through a series of lectures, talks and collaborative initiatives like 'Shraddhanjali', co-hosted by Raj Bhavan, Kolkata. Institute has deliberated ideas, endeavours of the visionaries, revolutionaries and connoisseurs of art, in order to commemorate their birth anniversaries throughout the year. Initiatives were recognized as salient proposals to mirror the expressions and contributions of some of the illustrious reformers towards emancipation of India and reckoned as a medium of reviving solidarity amongst its people.

Finally, the Institute's range of captivating publications on Pakistan, governance, society and state, its participation in programmes like heritage festivals, one to one meet, student's orientation programmes in form of internships to sensitize students about India's Asian neighbourhood are in themselves review of institute's imperatives and objectives that got evolved and emboldened with time, participation and involvement from multiple corridors within country and beyond.

ISCS extends gratitude to all its readers, followers, contributors and well-wishers for participating in the events and encouraging the institute and its members to address and articulate on viewpoints and themes of national and global dimensions.

Arindam Mukherjee
Director, ISCS, India

BANGLADESH STUDIES



International Webinar on BBIN Connectivity: Way Forward 28th February 2022

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as an autonomous Think Tank through a wide range of versatile activities and initiative have tried to foreground historic perspectives, contemporary ideologies and developmental perspectives. Institute through multiple projects initiatives and media assessment continues to focus and features diverse angles and perspectives of Indo-Bangladesh relations. Therefore, as a part of the institutional endeavours and interest ISCS on 28th of Feb 2022 organized a web based discussion on “BBIN Connectivity: Way Forward”. In order to decipher to what extent did BBIN as a policy could transpire itself as an agent for a Sub-Regional Co-operation between South Asia.

The Webinar was addressed by Distinguished Policy makers and scholars from Bangladesh, Nepal, and India. The Webinar marked its beginning with the remarks of the Distinguished Chair of the webinar Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS, India who suggested that along with sub-regional co-operation like trade and connectivity, cultural integration too should be given a lot of importance. Digital and technological factors can support infrastructural development or connectivity but it cannot develop a cultural convergence. Therefore in order to attain People-People reach and to give BBIN a better shape a significant importance should be given to social ethos ,community sensitivity. With regards to the concept BBIN- WAY

FORWARD, he added that BBIN is a substantial policy not only as a sub-regional integration but in a form of a multi-modal transit. Secondly, he added that the policy in near future should think beyond connectivity and should emphasize on aspects like digitization, SDG, environment and climate change. Also that the policy mechanism should be shaped in a way that it leads towards a cost effective access for respective governments through privatization and merge of regional financial institutions. Followed to which the first Distinguished Speaker of the event Dr. Mahfuz Kabir- Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, BIIS, Dhaka, mentioned that Bangladesh through BBIN approach is inclined to develop and improve its infrastructural layouts. Through Motor vehicle agreement it would like to enhance its connectivity and also work on its carbon emission plans.



The Speaker added that BBIN itself is extremely beneficial in developing footprints for Bangladesh in landlocked Nepal, Bhutan via India. His deliberation did quote about the financial assistance received through World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) in supporting Bangladesh towards transcending connectivity through roads, rails, waterways, coastal gateways etc. also harnessing the process of Digitization in multiple folds towards development. But a phenomena of timeline based orientation towards the implementation of BBIN priority areas are often at a lapse. Thus the policy further needs to be coaxed to attain timeline based implementation mechanisms in order to attain something tangible in future. The proceeding speaker Purushottam Ojha, former Commerce Secretary of Govt of Nepal, identified some very interesting ideas. He mentioned that BBIN remains significant as it dates back to later 1990's when the concept of sub-regional integration was a burgeoning one. The speaker further added that BBIN through multi-modal approach remained signatory to attain connectivity, stretching highways, coastal routes, roads etc. But the mechanism behind the people and good transit remains to be complex and onerous. Highlighting Way Forward pedagogy he added that in order to make BBIN a multi-dimensional approach, documentation and procedures with regards to transits and connectivity needs to be simplified, modernization in transportation and infrastructural layouts should be prioritized. Moreover, inter/intra industry linkages are to be flourished. As Bangladesh and India are slowly trending as nodal manufacturing bodies at a global platform, Nepal and Bhutan can lay support as decentralized production bodies and compliment India-Bangladesh through ancillary production units – production of motor parts, agro and support the inter country industry linkages. Nepal can also help by developing electrical grids and replace dependency on coal and natural resources with regards to energy and power buildouts. Lastly, he added that the four countries within the BBIN framework do share history, legacies; therefore, tourism packages should be developed and should be marketed to help nations in their economic gain and developmental partnerships.

The third speaker of the session Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), rendered a very important perspective. He said that BBIN should not be considered as medium for Sub-regional integration in isolation, but should be dealt in larger context like BIMSTEC, SAARC. Connectivity should be given a multi-modal stand, energy if produced should also be distributed subsequently. The distinguished speaker said that along with physical connectivity,



Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi

digital connectivity should also accede a lot of significance. As Digital connectivity reduces time, processing documentation cost, at the same time it indulges paperless trade and also facilitates quick exchange of data, experience, knowledge etc. Therefore, along with reformation in the policy, its mechanism in terms of digital skills should be harnessed and institutes should be upgraded, and the workforce should be trained to handle digital

Annual Report (2021-2022)



Dr. Mahfuz Kabir

methods in order to attain benefits in timely and cost effective ways.

The Final Speaker of the Webinar Prof. Sanjay Bhardwaj, Centre For South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, featured some interesting points; he mentioned that countries clubbed within the BBIN framework along with shared history, culture has a common ecological organic system, which can enhance connectivity and a better outreach among the countries

altogether. He further added that India had agog a lot of importance to Look East, now which is recognized as Act East to stretch out its developmental advocacy towards North East as well. In a way BBIN as a policy from time to time can emulate and help India to reach its goal. Secondly, Indian modules like better reciprocity, multilateral instead of bi-lateral approach, constructive unilateral didactics, resource sailing formula instead of resource nationalism, will lead the nation towards a better partnership and development fundamentals for itself through policy perspectives.

The discussion remained extremely interactive and marked its end with a Vote of Thanks by the Director, ISCS, Sri Arindam Mukherjee, who extended his gratitude to all the Distinguished International participants and audience for their inputs and consolidating their observations that would add value in instrumenting the policy in future.



Mr. Purushottam Ojha



Dr. Posh Raj Pandey



Prof. Sanjay Bhardwaj

Talk on Indo-Bangladesh Over 50: A Way Forward (In Collaboration with ICCR) 9th March, 2022

The followers of the ISCS are acquainted with the fact that ISCS from its inception has immersed significant interest in denoting shared struggle, history, culture as well as contemporary happenings of its neighbouring Bangladesh. Over a span of last 10 years or even more the institute through its activities both in Bangladesh as well as India have not only carried out in-depth studies, rolled out documentations on multifarious angles of Indo-Bangladesh relations but have tried to develop a corridor of engagement between the neighbours through inviting and assimilating academicians, eminent historians, policy makers and civil society actors from time to time in order to discuss and deliberate on the past and future of Indo-Bangladesh relations.

As Bangladesh completes its 50 years of liberation, therefore it has become a significant exercise for the institute as well to reminiscence about shared legacies and at the same time reciprocate about the Indo-Bangladesh united development prospects of the future. Thus, as a part of the Institute's endeavour, it had joined hands with The Indian Council For Cultural Relations (ICCR), Kolkata to host a

Talk on "Indo-Bangladesh Over 50: A Way Forward" by Smt. Aroma Dutta, MP, Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad. As a Distinguished Chair, Institute was delighted to have Sri. Manas Ghosh, Eminent Writer, Former Editor of Dainik Statesman, who is also known to be a close observer of the Indo-Bangladesh shared history and its evolving present.

The event marked its beginning with the remarks and observation of Sri. Arindam Mukherjee, Director ISCS who narrated a small story from gender and humanitarian perspectives – how Indian Soldiers during the war of independence in 1971 rendered respect and gratitude to women ostracized and throttled by Pakistani Army. The story conveyed reverence preserved between India Bangladesh over the last 50 years. Followed to which the Distinguished Chair also narrated similar incidences that he had perceived closely as a journalist during the Liberation War of 1971. In other words the reporter's diary accounted some lesser known facts about dastard



Annual Report (2021-2022)

killings, enormity surrounding refugee influx, and role of Indian diplomacy as intervening during the course of liberation war.

Smt. Aroma Dutta, the Speaker of the event expressed her gratitude for inviting her and shared some of the incidences of the war time as well. Her deliberation itself was a reflection of both countries' strong bondage, friendship breeding since 1971. Her talk also highlighted certain kaleidoscopic views of Indo-Bangladesh neighbourhood challenges. But her ideas reiterated the need of the bondings, shared trust, solidarity to be preserved and carried forward through bi-lateral engagement, multi-modal ties as a solution to the existing challenges. A large number of the enthusiastic audience, especially youth and students present at the event did reciprocate with the Speaker and the Chair on cross border engagements from diverse angles and expressed their warmth and proclivity for the people of Bangladesh.

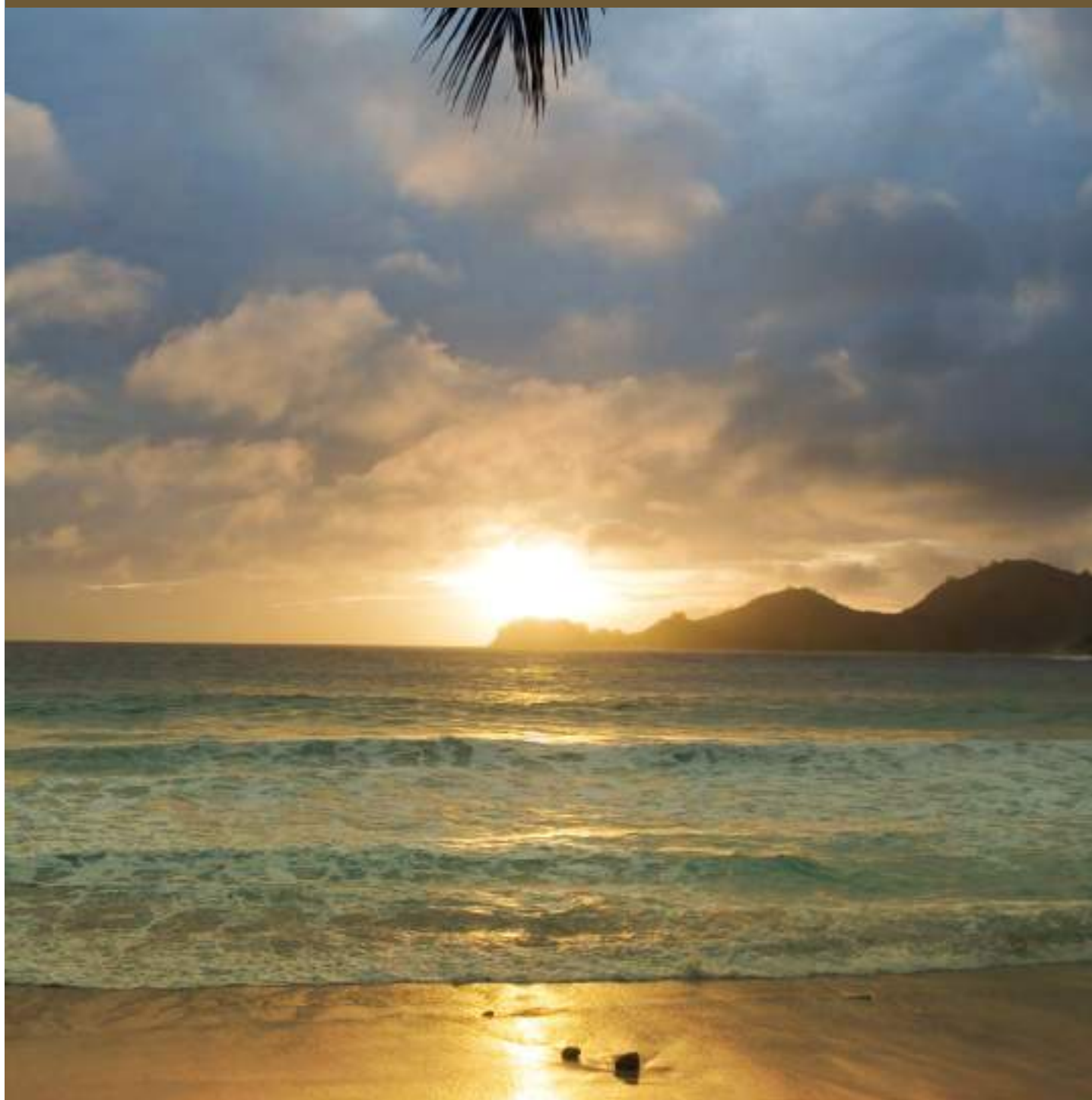
The event came to its conclusion with the remarks of Sri. Parthiban, Regional Director, RTC-ICCR, Kolkata who defined that with vistas of bi-lateral engagement and growing cultural correspondence and extended support between countries during each other's thick and thin for last 50 years the Indo-Bangladesh partnership has already entered its golden phase. Thus efforts should be anchored to conserve, strengthen and honour the partnership in coming years as well.



Annual Report (2021-2022)



INDIAN OCEAN RESOURCE CENTRE



International Web Symposium

On

Indian Ocean Security Challenges and Strategies

(In Collaboration with University of Mumbai and
Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya)

23rd August, 2021

In the present era, Indian Ocean has been transformed as hot bed of contestation due to its geo-strategic and economic position. The rise of Chinese aggression along with the activities of the non-state actors are jeopardising the peace, stability and the order of this maritime domain. Keeping this in mind Institute of Social and Cultural Studies had organised a day long web based symposium on Indian Ocean region titled “Indian Ocean Security Challenges and Strategies”.

The inaugural session saw the presence of the Honourable Minister of Education and Skill Development, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Dr. Shakti Sinha, Hony. Director, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies, Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai and Mr. Goutom Chakraborti, Ex. Security Advisor, Kolkata Port Trust and Honorary Editor, Sagar Quotes.

The inaugural session started with the introductory note from Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, where he extended his gratitude to the honourable Minister of Education and the other distinguished speakers to be part of this endeavour. In his deliberation he pointed out the geostrategic and economic importance of the India Ocean region and the forces that compelled India to reshape its policy and vision towards its immediate maritime domain. He thereafter highlighted the various strategic, economic, diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives of India across the IOR. In course of his disquisition the speaker also raised a significant question of whether the present political crisis in Afghanistan may impact the overall security aspects of the Indian Ocean region and opined for an holistic analysis and assessment of the subsequent events in Afghanistan that could have an impact on the IOR region.

Honourable Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan commenced his deliberation by acknowledging the importance of Indian Ocean. He highlighted how, in the past, India had established deep maritime linkages with other parts of the world specially the South East Asian region. He commented that Indian Ocean is not only connected with our pasts but also has the ability to shape the future of India. In his speech he acknowledged the vision of Prime Minister Modi who had redefined Indian approach towards Indian Ocean by taking up efforts to deepen India’s cooperation with the countries of the Indian Ocean region. The minister in his speech addressed a plethora of issues starting from maritime growth, India’s aim of achieving a blue economy status, significance of maritime policy like SAGAR, Indo-Pacific Ocean initiative, Sagarmala programme, necessity and relevance of regional and multinational organisations like IORA, QUAD, BRICS for achieving regional security. He concluded his

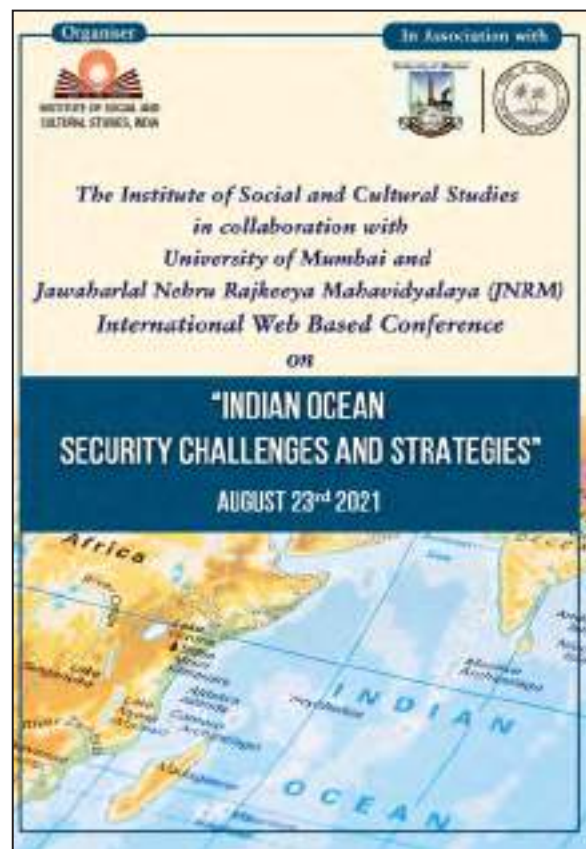
speech by stating India's commitment to adhere by the principles unfolded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address in the United Nation Security Council on Maritime Security which highlighted necessity of the peaceful solution of maritime dispute and free maritime trade.

He was followed by Dr. Shakti Sinha who initiated his presentation by acknowledging the importance of Maritime space, which he regarded as a domain significant in establishing world power. He stated that long ago China understood the significance of the maritime space and gradually was extending her presence in Indian Ocean. He also highlighted how effectively Indian Prime Minister, by reshaping the policy is resisting the rise of China in India's immediate maritime neighbourhood. He opined that to secure and stabilise the maritime domain, India needed to cooperate with other countries of the world and regional powers and mentioned the significance of QUAD in this regard. He concluded his speech by saying that India's maritime interest rested on a deep cordial bilateral relation with other littoral countries of Indian Ocean which could be ensured by giving the small neighbouring countries access to the large Indian market.

Indian Ocean had long been a priority area of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies which carried out regular deliberation, research and publication in this area. As a part of that endeavour Institute of Social and Cultural Studies decided to launch a Reader's digest on Indian Ocean titled "Sagar Quotes." Mr. Goutom Chakraborti, Hony. Editor of the Sagar Quotes in his presentation acknowledging the geo-strategic, economic and historical importance of Indian Ocean and the policy initiatives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this regard, explained the vision of the bi-monthly periodical and the areas it had identified for its academic exploration.

The special address was presented by Anuradha Majumder, Dean, Mumbai University, on behalf of Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor of the Mumbai University, who stated it as a privilege to collaborate with Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya (JNRM) to organise this web based symposium on Indian Ocean. The distinguished speaker, in her short note highlighted the growing significance of Indian Ocean and the necessity of such academic disquisition.

First Academic Session, "A stage for Policy, Power and Diplomacy" was chaired by Vice Admiral (Retd) Shekhar Sinha, Former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff & Commander in Chief, Western Naval Command. The panel of speakers included,



Annual Report (2021-2022)

Interregional Session: March 11, 12noon	
Welcoming address:	Sri Siddhartha Rathnayake, Director, ICS, India
Guest of Honour:	Srija Bhattacharya Raychaudhary, Joint/Visiting Minister of Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
Keynote Speaker:	Dr. Sukirti Sarkar, Deputy Director, Raj Bhawan/Vigyanee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies, MCI University, Victoria, Singapore Tilakva, India Foundation, New Delhi Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore Senior Fellow, WPI, India
Special Address:	Prof. Subhas Anandekar, Vice-Chancellor, University of Mumbai
First Academic Session- Indian Ocean: 8 stages for Policy, Power and Diplomacy 10-11.30pm(IST)	
Chair:	Vivek Kumar Shukla/Dr. Jyoti Shinde, Former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff & Commander in Chief, National News Commission
Dr. Anand Mohan	Chief Executive and Executive Director, Institute for Australia India Engagement(IAM) and Editor in Chief India Times
Air Cdr (Retd) Jitendra Babu Choudhary	Treasurer, University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh
Tarun Singh	Director, PNC Diplomatic Academy of Warsaw
Dr. Anand Mohan	Director, Institute for Governance in Maritime Studies, University of Mumbai
Second Academic:	
IRIA- 8 Issues Strengthening Maritime Cooperation and Security Coordination 2.30-4pm(IST)	
Chair:	Prof. Rajesh Datta, Director, School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, University of Mumbai
Anand Mohan/Supernumerary M. Mehta	Former High Commissioner of India, Africa, Maldives, Member National Human Rights Commission
Dr. Ranganath Rajan	Nodal Head of Dept of Science and Technology and National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Science and Technology and Science, Chief Director of the Institute for Economic and Research Innovation of Fukuoka University of Technology, Associate Research Fellow of the Indian Institute of Technology, Chairperson of the Indian Ocean Africa South of the Millennium Project
Dr. Chandrajit Raychaudhary	Research Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore
Dr. Ranganath Rajan	Independent Lecturer, Researcher, Maldives
Valentine's Day (ST)	
Dr. P. H. Bhat	Associate Professor, IIS, Pune, India

(Each Speaker will get 15 mins for deliberation after which deliberation a discussion session for 15 mins among Speakers and participants)

Dr. Ashutosh Mishra, Chief Executive and Executive Director, Institute for Australia India Engagement (IAIE) and Editor in Chief, India News, Air Cadre (Retd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury— Treasurer, University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh and Ton Sinh Thanh— Ambassador, PhD, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam.

The first session commenced with the introductory note of Vice Admiral (Retd) Shekhar Sinha that constituted a brief disquisition on why Indian Ocean has become a stage for policy initiatives. According to the speaker, the vast mass of the ocean required governance because it is the prime medium of trade and commerce and opined that every nation has a responsibility to insure that the trade lanes remained open. He pointed out various reasons which transformed Indian Ocean into a focal point of International politics in recent times. He ended his introductory deliberation raising the relevant question of whether diplomacy could handle the growing power play in the IOR.

The first speaker of the session, Dr. Ashutosh Mishra presented the evolution and changing dynamics of India-Australia relation. The distinguished speaker wonderfully narrated how both nations which exhibited greater divergence than cooperation in the past due to ideological consideration at present developed close bilateral cooperation. He mentioned the role of successive Australian Prime Ministers and specially Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's endeavour to bring the two nations closer.

Dr. Mishra also in his disquisition mentioned the drivers of renewed cooperation between India and Australia. According to the speaker on the one hand India's military confrontation with China, Chinese repeated initiative to block India's membership in the United Nation Security Council and, Nuclear Supply Group, shielding Pakistan from FATA sanctions, Prime Minister Modi's Act East Policy together with his vision of a rule based free and open maritime region and on the other hand Australia's persistent criticism of China regarding the Uyghur, Hong Kong and the Taiwan issue, Chinese sponsored cyber-attack in Australia, Chinese interference in the domestic affairs of Canberra brought the two countries together. He concluded by highlighting how bilateral relationship between the two nations at present is based on a larger Indo-Pacific context.

The subsequent speaker Ishfaq Illahi Choudhury initiated his disquisition by narrating the importance of Indian Ocean. His presentation comprised of the political history of this maritime domain, the



Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Guest of Honour

significance of choke point across IOR, the causes of the present emerging rivalry between India and China in this region and its impact over smaller nations like Bangladesh.

In the due course of his presentation the distinguished speaker vividly discussed the maritime policy of Bangladesh which according to him seek peaceful environment, peaceful

and equitable use of sea resources, fights against non-traditional security threats, active regional cooperation and also a balance in foreign assistance from various world and regional powers for its development.

The following speaker, ambassador Ton Sinh Thanh in his deliberation opined that geo-strategically and economically Indian Ocean is not only important for India but also for other countries including South East Asian nations and China. He said that for Vietnam, Indian Ocean is very significant as because its economy largely depended on maritime trade. The speaker opined that the recent change in the regime in Afghanistan and Myanmar would help China increase its maritime dominance in Indian Ocean. He also added that the growing monopolization of the Chinese navy in South China Sea would have a direct effect over the security scenario of Indian Ocean and opined that IOR should not be perceived in isolation rather it should be seen from a greater perspective of Indo-Pacific. He concluded his disquisition remarking that though the nations have started to change their policies towards Indian Ocean, still more effort is required in this regard.

The last speaker of the session, Anindita Majumdar, Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology, In-charge Director, CEMAS explained the goal and objective of the centre. According to the distinguished speaker the mission of CEMAS is to provide quality education in subjects related to national maritime growth and development, observing an interdisciplinary approach across humanities, law, commerce & management, and science & technology, so as to empower students with the knowledge, critical



Dr. Shakti Sinha, Key Note Speaker

thinking skills and focus required to address maritime challenges and harness the seas for furthering developmental goals, in an inclusive, integrated and holistic manner.

The second academic session, “IORA: A Force Strengthening Maritime Cooperation and Security Coordination”, chaired by Prof. Rajesh Kharat – Director, School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, University of



Vice Admiral (Retd) Shekhar Sinha, Chairperson of the first session

Mumbai, had eminent scholars and experts in the panel like, Amb (Retd) Dnyaneshwar M. Muley, Former High Commissioner of India, Male, Maldives, Member, National Human Rights Commission, Dr. Rasigan Maharaj, Nodal Head of Deptt. of Science and Technology and National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Scientometrics and Science, Dr. Chulanee Attanayake – Research Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore, Dr. Rasheeda Mohamed Didi – Independent Lecturer/Researcher, Maldives.

The second session started with the introductory address of the chair, Professor Rajesh Kharat who, in his introductory speech analysed the political history of Indian Ocean and opined that disquisition on Indian Ocean would not be confined within the domain of security and strategy and issues like environment, climate change, trade and investment would be taken into consideration.

The first speaker of the session, Ambassador Muley’s presentation focused on India-Maldives relations in the context of Indian Ocean. He initiated his presentation by mentioning the geo-strategic importance of Maldives and the challenges it faced in the due course of time. He meaningfully analysed India’s deep bilateral relation with Maldives and how India, Sri Lanka and Maldives through a trilateral cooperation were insuring security, peace, order and progress in this region.

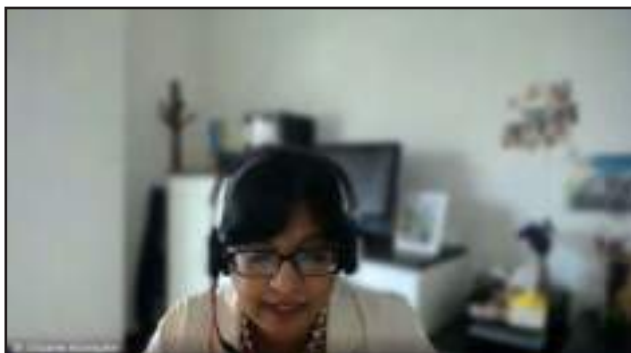
In the concluding part of his deliberation Ambassador Muley discussed the issue of the greater Indo-Pacific cooperation and opined that through such cooperation India and United States of America could jointly work for the security of Indian Ocean ensuring stability and order in this region.

The subsequent speaker, Rasigan Maharaj in his presentation meaningfully discussed the emerging socio-economic and ecological challenges that the Indian Ocean region faced in the 21st Century and the necessity of cooperation and collaboration to prevent this. The distinguished speaker in his presentation focused on the impacts of climate change on the littoral countries of Indian Ocean Region. In his disquisition he viewed that regional cooperation like Indian Ocean Rim Association could play an important role to prevent impacts of the climate change by generating valuable data for scientific research and technical innovation in this regard.

He was followed by Dr. Chulanee Attanayake who discussed the importance of Indian Ocean and analysed the traditional and the non-traditional security threats that existed in this region. Her presentation highlighted the Chinese expansion in this region through BRI and other economic and military initiatives and the counter initiative by India through multilateral cooperation like QUAD, the prevailing security and non-security threats over this region etc. Mentioning the diversified political, social, cultural and national interests of the nations around Indian Ocean she opined that multilateral organisation like Indian Ocean Rim Association could play the role of uniting the diversified interests of the nation's, states of Indian Ocean region, coordinating its maritime security and maintaining stability and neutrality of the region as the big powers continued to compete to dominate this area. In the concluding part of her discussion, the distinguished scholar focused on the role that Sri Lanka could play for maintaining peace and stability of Indian Ocean region.

The last speaker of the session Dr. Rasheeda Mohamed Didi from a Maldivian point of view discussed the significance of Indian Ocean. She started by unfolding the present Maldivian government's policy that aims at the stability and prosperity of the Indian Ocean and added that the Maldivian government is keen to prevent the possibility of turning this region into a zone of conflict. She subsequently discussed in detail, the objectives and the issues related to the trilateral security cooperation between India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. In the due course of her discussion, pointing out the growing concern in India about Maldives growing proximity to China, she opined that India-Maldives bilateral relations had a history of fluctuation as regime change happened in the country. However, she added that the interest of both the countries is locked in close cooperation which is reflected in the policies adopted by both nations towards each other.

The web based symposium came to an end with the valedictory speech by Prof. Rajesh Kharat, University of Mumbai, who thanked Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya (JNRM) and University of Mumbai for their efforts in organising this one day web based symposium. He believed that such academic disquisition would in future help to raise the consciousness of the people towards Indian Ocean and would help to chalk out policies for a peaceful, stable and a rule based Indian Ocean Region.



Dr. Chulanee Attanayake, Speaker



Air Cadre (Retd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, Speaker

Heritage Festival, Durban, South Africa

(In Collaboration with Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, ICCR, at
Consulate General of India, Durban, African Heritage Collectives
and KZN Department of Art & Culture)

24th-26th September, 2021

On the eve of 24th September as South Africa celebrates its heritage day recognising and celebrating the diversity of culture, beliefs and traditions of the nation. India shares a deep cultural relation with South Africa that dates back to several centuries. Indian diaspora holds a significant place in the cultural milieu of South African nation.

Acknowledging this deep bilateral cultural relationship between both nations and commemorating the South African Heritage Day, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre at the Consulate General of India, along with Institute of Social and Cultural Studies India, African Heritage Collective and KZN Department of Arts and Culture organised a three day long web based heritage festival titled Virasat Parva/ Umcimbi Wamagugu from 24th to 26th September, 2021, highlighting the cultural diversity and cultural interconnectedness between both India and South Africa.

The first day of this web based heritage festival commenced with a meaningful disquisition on Heritage of love and compassion by distinguished speakers like Ms. Fezeka Shandu, Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseth, Ms. Nithabiseng Mohanela and Dr. Madhu Agnihotri. On the following day, the discourse of the online heritage festival focused on the issue of Heritage of Dialogue and Cooperation where eminent speakers like Mr. Thokazani Oka Mbalane, Dr. Ishani Naskar, Mr. Samu Pacho and Dr. Janardan Ghose shared their valuable thoughts over this issue.

The concluding day of the web based symposium saw distinguished speakers like Ms. Zee Imbongi, Dr. Phirmi Bodo, Mr. Khulekani Mkhize and Mr. Syon Niyogi deliberating on the topic of the Heritage of Hard work and Experimentation. Beside the academic deliberation this web based symposium also displayed delectable cultural performances of accomplished artists that exhibited the cultural heritage of both India and South Africa.



Annual Report (2021-2022)

PURVODAYA



iii) job creation

It's a matter of pride that the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata has organized the initiative which will bring out many new ideas on 'Mission Purvodaya'. In addition, the bi-monthly and bi-lingual publication on 'Purvodaya' has brought out various informed opinions by eminent scholars and will continue to do so.

The Editor of the bulletin, Dr. Sujit Pruseth, who later also coordinated the discussion session described how the initiative could be a host of opportunities to muster the national/international and regional writers to depict the growth of the region. Also regular documentation and other initiative that will be rolled out as a part of the proposed chapter can help to plot, analyse and sketch the developmental goals of the region persistently.

The launch of the Chapter and the Bulletin was followed by a Discourse on "Mission Purvodaya: A Gateway of Opportunities" where the speakers were none other than the writers of the first edition of the Bi-Lingual Bulletin such as Dr. Tapas Kumar Sarangi, Asst. Director, National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development, Dr. Dinesh Kumar Nayak, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, Dr Sarbeswar Pradhan, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Dr .Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Dr. Rajeeb Nayak, Eminent Journalist and Dr. Arinda mSaha, MD, Vista Intelligence. Each of them congratulated the Institute for the initiative and added how the policy and joint endeavours could arch a spree of development and growth for the region and its share holders. The event received a vote of Thanks by Sri. Krishnendu Baksi, Programme Coordinator, ISCS, India.



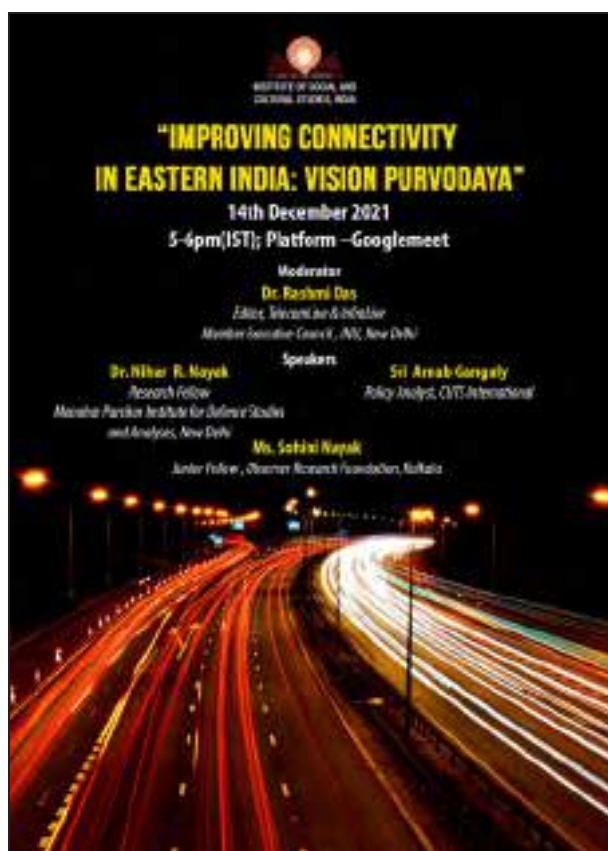
Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship at lunch of 'Purvodaya'

Webinar on **Improving Connectivity in Eastern India: Vision Purvodaya** 14th December, 2021

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies as part of its new launched Chapter of Study “Purvodaya”, which is dedicated to discuss and manifest the challenges, growth and development of Eastern India, organized a web based discussion on “ Improving Connectivity in Eastern India: Vision Purvodaya”. The discussion received participation of eminent researcher, policy maker and editor, who as a part of their professional endeavours, very often yet closely introspect the initiatives of country’s surface connectivity, i.e. rail and road connectivity and also accentuate on the fact that surface connectivity of regions and states with time are becoming vital in order to get the regions empowered into the spheres of tourism, trade and commerce and to enhance people to people connect. The discussion started with the remarks of Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseth, Chapter coordinator, Purvodaya, ISCS, India who regarded that Purvodaya, whether

in terms of policy or imperatives, would trigger the overall growth of Eastern India. He featured on some rail enroutings which are being operational through West Bengal and Sikkim and some road connects cutting across Bihar and Orissa as milestones of progress and sustainability of future Eastern India in terms of labour markets, infrastructure and mobility.

The web based discussion received engagements of resource personnel like Dr. Rashmi Das, Editor, Telecomlive & Infralive, Member Executive Council, JNU, New Delhi, who as a moderator shared her observations saying, that improving connectivity in Eastern region is the priority of the Purvodaya Mission. But it’s time to think about certain reformations in the cartography of connectivity, infrastructure and physical integration keeping the pandemic times in mind. Therefore model partnership and policy level reformation need to regain their strength to boostbetter inter-corridor networks, north-east connectivity and transboundary connectivity. The Bharat Mala project needs to be completed and





Dr. Nihar Nayak

second phase should be taken forward in terms of man power planning, industrialization along with cementing basic rail and road connectivity in future.

Followed to which the first Speaker, Dr. Nihar Nayak, Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi traced that Purvodaya concept in itself is extremely vital as this concept could become neighbourhood-first policy and

regional development policy of future India. Along with infrastructure, it looks into trade, culture, linkages, disaster management, climate change and other objectives too. Thus, not only in terms of connectivity, but also this policy in itself will initiate growth for itself taking along our neighbours in years to come. This project will also take forward bilateral, trilateral highway connectivity ahead, proving lucrative in terms of tourism and trade benefits. The connectivity through neighbourings and future development will help to protect security corridors of the region and have an access to neighbour ports and highways as part of multiple transit trade corridors. He highlighted some challenges that policy makers must look into in order to cantabile connectivity such as – acting on time frame based mechanism, ratifying passenger protocol acts, resolving challenges in transit trade, issues regarding quality of roads that need to be mended, transmission lines to transmit electricity in Nepal and Bhutan are to be improved.

Arnab Ganguly, Policy Analyst, Cuts International as Second Speaker mentioned that Purvodaya mission should not only remain restricted on bundle to project but also take advantage of already rolled out schemes – Bharat Mala project, Sagar Mala scheme. The speaker's focus remained on creating Indo-Bangladesh Synergy through Purvodaya Project especially through export processing modes, as infrastructural development happening at Mymensingh in Bangladesh that would need a lot of iron and steel. Purvodaya region of India, which is rich in terms of steel hubs can provide resources to the necessary developing areas of Bangladesh and develop a friendly trade integration. Purvodaya can help connect Bangladesh with north-east through shipping industry and also Purvodaya routes can compliment trade between Bangladesh and North-East equally. Thus, Purvodaya, in other words, can help in Bangladesh and North-East connect and also in the same line induce business relation between India-Bangladesh through raw material supply in developing areas of Bangladesh.



Dr. Rashmi Das

Annual Report (2021-2022)

Ms. Sohini Nayak, Junior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata, the final speaker who started her deliberation by stating that Purovodaya scheme has a very robust stature and can help the country to take itself forward in many dynamic platforms. It gives opportunity for modernized cross border transport and trade interchange. If this opportunity is trapped, it would help initiate a profitable connectivity between North-East and Bangladesh featuring Kolkata as a liaison city. The policy gives opportunity to BIMSTEC, BBIN a leveraging platform to facilitate cooperations and regional integrations in a more lucrative way. The speaker rested her deliberation with a clear note that Mission Purvodaya can become a vital league for the country to initiate the development of itself and its landlocked neighbours.

The discussion also followed an interactive session which unleashed the fact that how Mission Purvodaya as a policy can open out multi-dimensional framework for the country at the global platform.



Sri Arnab Ganguly



Ms. Sohini Nayak

International Webinar Religious Economy and Purvodaya 11th February, 2022

India is a land of diverse cultures and ethnicity where people from various faiths co-exist peacefully. The spellbinding architectural marvels in form of temples and other religious shrines in itself is a reflection of the Indian philosophy, beliefs and spirituality. For years these ancient places of worship, along with shredding light on culture and heritage, continue to trend tourism, service sectors and contribute to country's related economy significantly. In the last couple of years, the Government of India and other stakeholders have taken up many steps towards strengthening the infrastructure in and around the ancient places of worship. For example, the revamping of the Kashi Vishwanath corridor in Varanasi on the banks of River Ganga has yielded attention of global audiences and forums in the recent past.

In order to discuss how religion in terms of belief, customary practices, infrastructure is and can become a protean medium of connectivity, economy, trade and people to people connect was something, that was deliberated through an webinar organized by the ISCS's Chapter on Purvodaya on 11th February 2022 from 6 pm onwards over a Digital Platform.

The Webinar started with an introductory note by Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseth, Chapter Coordinator, Purvodaya, who denoted that Religious Economy and Purvodaya is one of the most potent topics to harness the growth of multiple areas like tourism, trade, economy and related industries. Also this topic seems to be very potent because govt. of India is also emphasizing on the issue to highlight our exotic culture through

developing infrastructural facility and inducing opportunities for empowerment. Schemes like "Apni Gharohar Apni Pehchan" are built up through clubbing archaeological sites, monuments and historic places to inculcate heritage tourism, urban city development and economic upliftments and restoration and conservation of heritage monuments. Therefore, topic of the webinar's discussion is whether religious economy and Purvodaya would act as a growth cycle to facilitate overall



growth of the region also of the country altogether.

Followed to which the Keynote Speaker of the Webinar, Prof. V.K. Malhotra, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), GOI, very briefly manifested that this topic combines two significant areas: first, Purvodaya and second, religious economy. Though the idea of the Mission Purvodaya was initially restricted to steel production capacity of India, but bringing diversities and thinking of the mission or concept in diversified format in itself seems to be very unique. As a socio-economic growth, exhibiting heritage and incorporating efforts to cultivate empowerment opportunities, it will add on to the value chain of the mission. The Speaker described the reports that featured how religion solely through faith, practices has evolved the lives of the people and has ruled the economics of India to a great extent. Therefore, he asserts that amalgamating century old belief with trajectory of development will and would continue to be important for nation's growth and socio-economic augmentation.

Followed to which the International Speaker M.S. Siddiqui, Legal economist from Bangladesh mentioned that Purvodaya receives maximum tourists from Bangladesh especially for shopping and marketing. Convenient connectivity mode from Bangladesh to West Bengal facilitates tourism between the two countries. Border Haat is also rich source for commodity purchase amongst two nations. Thus festivities, tourist places, religious monuments are an important mode to initiate monetary transaction and people to people connect.

Followed to which the Second speaker of the discourse Ms. Sarmila Purohit, eminent archaeologist and visiting faculty of university of Calcutta, explained how Eastern region that comprises of four Dhams, Shakti-Pithas, Ganga Sagaremitssacredness and at the same time, induces revenue collection, empowerment and strengthens community solidarity. Religious Economy not only builds connectivity but plays a greater role for MSME, informal sector, gender empowerment. Access- Accommodation-Attraction is the triangle that gets facilitated through Religious Economy. Thus, religion itself is a hub of economy



Prof. V.K. Malhotra

and empowerment to many across regions, if tourism, accommodation, connectivity are improvised. Further religion and its related economy can help the country to accede a great value in overall development.

Sri Sunil Patnaik, Director, Odishan Institute of Maritime and South East Asian Studies, Bhubaneshwar, focussed on Buddhist circuit as in how the ancient East Coast Maritime has spread the trends of Buddhism across the Maritime Silk routes from

historical as well as contemporary perspectives. Therefore, if plans and policies are designed in planned way, religion can become an important component to attain connectivity between India and South East Asia and in parallel to tourism, trade- economy will also get a lot of boost.

The final speaker of the event, Dr. Asutosh Misra, Chief Executive and Executive Director, Institute for Australia India Engagement (IAIE) and India Editor-in-Chief, India News, who shares his roots from Benaras, Uttar Pradesh regarded that since 2014, a lot of focus has been generated towards representing and restoration of India's cultural heritage. Like West Bengal, a state like Uttar Pradesh along with Kumbh Mela, has recently built Kashi Corridors, not only facilitates tourism or economy but leads to total development or revamp of the city and has given immense opportunities to local traders to exhibit and trade on their products. With the construction of highways, connectivity has improved to attract national and international tourists significantly.

The Chair of the Webinar Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, applauded the initiative of the institute and mentioned that the entire panorama of discussion has been extremely important because it complies the survivality of historical perspectives, with the call for the need of development for the growth of our nation as a whole.

Though it is really difficult to transpire various angles of such a vast and interesting topic with a short span of time, notable Speakers and Distinguished Chair and dignitaries who participated in the discourse later over brief question and answer session and comments designated that religious institutions steeped in history, embedded with customary beliefs and engaged in socio-capital aspects, can pave a vital road to nation's growth in future.



Mr. M.S. Siddiqui



Ms. Sarmila Purohit

FREEDOM STRUGGLE STUDIES



Annual Report (2021-2022)

Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary

Webinar-I

Bharatvarsha: In the vision of Sri Aurobindo (In Collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata) 29th July, 2021

Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghose) holds a significant place in the discourse of Indian liberation movement. He was a national pioneer and freedom fighter writing extensively on political issues and was one of the earliest advocates of purna or total Swaraj. Besides being a revolutionary leader devoted to the endeavour of emancipating his motherland from British subjugation, he is also acknowledged as a great scholar, educationist, poet, philosopher and above all a spiritual leader who undertook efforts to transform India as a self-reliant, philosophically and spiritually conscious nation.

However, in the decades following Independence apparently did not turn out to be favourable for acknowledging the multifaceted efforts of Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghose), rather his emergence and recognition as a patriot, nationalist and lover of humanity, has been extremely slow and almost invisible. In order to create awareness and inspire the youth of today with vision of Sri Aurobindo in Indian historical discourse induced, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India in collaboration with Sri. Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata organized a webinar titled "Bharatvarsha: In the vision of Sri. Aurobindo" commemorating his 150th birth anniversary where a meaningful academic deliberation on various aspects of this great patriot took place. Chaired by Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata it had Dr. Ananda Reddy, Director, Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry as a distinguished speaker.

Organised by
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

In association with
Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata

Webinar on
Bharatvarsha: In the Vision of Sri Aurobindo
29th July 2021; 6-7pm (IST)

Chairperson
Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose
Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata

Distinguished Speaker
Dr. Ananda Reddy
Director, Sri Aurobindo Centre For Advanced Research, Puducherry

Followed by a Question and Answer Session

Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary

CONTACT :
aurobindo@iscsindia.com

The webinar commenced with the introductory note of Ujjwal Kumar Bose who, on behalf of the organizers, underlined the objective and the motivation behind organizing this webinar. He thereafter requested the chair of the webinar Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose to initiate the highly anticipated academic discourse.

Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose in his short introductory note introduced the distinguished speaker to the august audience and requested the speaker to initiate his deliberation.



Sri Ujjwal Kumar Bose

period and the colonization of India by the European powers in the modern period initiated the second and the third wave of crisis within the Indian nation. In due course of his deliberation the speaker interestingly opined that though Indian nation faced repeated crisis in various phases of history, yet it successfully emerged out of such crisis.

The distinguished speaker thereafter focused his discussion on Sri Aurobindo's thoughts by meaningfully discussing national pioneer's rationale behind reviving the dormant intellectual and critical impulse of India.

In the due course of his discussion the speaker vividly discussed Sri Aurobindo's political thoughts where he stated why the national icon was critical about India's adoption of parliamentary democracy and added that Sri Aurobindo firmly believed that by imitating the west, India had lost its own identity. The distinguished speaker also threw some light over Sri Aurobindo's firm belief on United India or Akhanda Bharat.

The presentation was followed by a concluding note from the chair. Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose spoke about how Vedas played a significant role in shaping the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo. In due course of his deliberation, he also identified the similarities between Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda and commented that both the national icons taught India's mission to the rest of the world. The chair opined that the determined endeavours of Swami



Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose

Annual Report (2021-2022)

Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo focused on rediscovering and reviving the lost intellectual identity of India. He also highlighted how Sri Aurobindo conceived the Sanatana Dharma as the basis of Indian nationalism. At the end, he congratulated the distinguished speaker for narrating how India as a nation in due course of history, emerged successfully from various waves of crisis.

Following the concluding remarks from the chair, the session was opened for the audience for their questions and comments. A plethora of questions, which came in were adequately replied by the speaker.

The webinar ended with the vote of thanks from Sri Ujjwal Kumar Bose who, on behalf of the organizers congratulated the chair and the speaker for their valuable inputs.



Dr. Ananda Reddy

Webinar-II

Achena Ajana Sri Aurobindo

(In Collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata)

18 September, 2021

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies that has been addressing waves of history and facets of contemporary socio-cultural milieu through extensive research, documentation and regular writings in collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata has started rolling out a series to discuss and exchange ideas concerning the works and ideology of Sri Aurobindo, especially in the year of the commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of this visionary. The Second from this series of web based discussion on “Achena Ajana Sri Aurobindo” started with a brief note by the Director of ISCS, Sri Arindam Mukherjee who introduced how the ideas of this great nationalist and philosopher could help in the transformation of the society and approach of the present generation, which is extremely self-obsessed and drive them towards a network of solidarity. He further encouraged them to work for the growth and prosperity of self and others.

The Speaker of the session Sri Anurag Bandyopadhyay, eminent researcher, writer, managing Trustee and Founder of Overman Research Foundation deliberated some facets of Sri Aurobindo that were unknown to many. The Speaker portrayed the extraordinary life of Sri Aurobindo in terms of his spirituality, his concepts of nationality and nationhood. The speaker rendered early life of Sri Aurobindo through vivid

episodes, his interactions with national and international intellectuals and other proceedings. The Speaker's deliberation mostly focused on certain prominent shifts in the life of Sri Aurobindo and how these shifts spearheaded him towards spirituality and an axiom of serving his motherland extensively. The Speaker also shared about Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary acts and sacrifices to fulfil his commitment in liberating his nation from the clutches of



Annual Report (2021-2022)

colonialism in a very précise manner.

The session also initiated a very interesting discussion amongst Speaker and the audiences, which comprised of youths from multiple sphere. The interest and the enthusiasm of the audiences, which got boasted during interactive session, featured the interests and inspiration that the present generation intends to seek from visionaries like Sri Aurobindo for building their lives and attaining a growth-based transformations of their country altogether.



Sri Anurag Bandyopadhyay



Sri Biswajit Gangopadhyay

Webinar-III

Sri Maa O Sri Aurobinder Dibya Sannidhya Tinti Satantra Jiban Angika

(In Collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata)

30th October, 2021

To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India and Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata together decided to jointly organize a series of web based disquisition on Sri Aurobindo's life and endeavours. The third part of this series titled "Sri Maa O Sri Aurobinder dibyasannidhya -Tinti satantra jiban angika" took place on 30th October, 2021 at 7pm. Moderated by Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Insitute of Social and Cultural Studies, it had Shri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan as the distinguished proponent of the webinar and Shri Ujjwal Kumar Bose, Sri Aurobindo Kendra, Malda as the speaker.

This web based academic deliberation commenced with the introductory note of Shri Arindam Mukherjee where he spoke about Institute's plan to organize a yearlong disquisition on Sri Aurobindo's life and philosophy. He briefly spoke about three close associates of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Maa, famous artist Mukul Dey, Nanibala Devi alias Jaya Devi and Shobha Mitra about whom the distinguished speaker would further elaborately discuss during his presentation. He ended his introductory deliberation by requesting the proponent of the webinar Sri Biswajit Ganguly to introduce the speaker to the august audience.



Shri Biswajit Ganguly, in his short deliberation, introduced the speaker Ujjwal Bose and narrated his academic endeavours relating Sri Aurobindo and Sri Maa. He subsequently gave a short Bio sketch of Mukul Dey, Nanibala Devi (Jaya Devi) and Shobha Mitra and mentioned their close association with the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Beside this, through his speech, he beautifully sketched out a

possible path for the distinguished speaker on which he could carry out his presentation.

The speaker, Ujjwal Kumar Bose focused his deliberation on the evolution of the Ashram life of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Maa through the narratives provided by Mukul Dey, Nanibala Debi (Jaya Devi) and Shobha Mitra. He commenced his disquisition by analyzing Sri Aurobindo's relation with famous artist Mukul Dey. The speaker mentioned how Sri Dey, a pioneer of dry point etching technique of art in India, met Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry to sketch his portrait at a time when visiting the former French colony brought anybody under the surveillance of British intelligence agency. The distinguished speaker mentioned the discourse between Sri Aurobindo and Mukul Dey during the latter's stay in the Pondicherry Ashram on numerous issues.

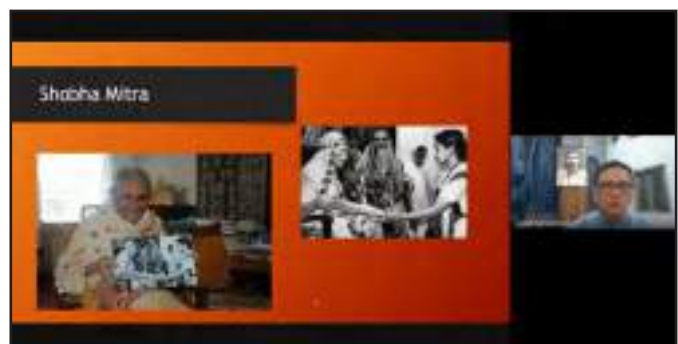
The speaker thereafter focused his discussion on Nanibala Devi alias Jaya Devi, who visited the Pondicherry Ashram in the year 1926. In his discourse, the speaker highlighted how during her initial stay in Pondicherry Jaya Devi played an instrumental role in changing how Sri Aurobindo would be addressed by people and also mentioned her role in organizing Durga Puja in the Pondicherry Ashram.

In the last part of his deliberation, the speaker discussed about Srimati Shobha Mitra and her close association with the Pondicherry Ashram. Acknowledging Srimati Mitra as an important person who played significant role in the development of the singing and dancing style in the Pondicherry Ashram. Sri Bose also mentioned how she received immense love and affection from Sri Maa.

Soon after the deliberation was concluded the moderator opened the session to the audience for their questions, comments and suggestions. A few questions were raised and observations were tabled which were adequately replied by the speaker.



Sri Ujjwal Bose



Webinar-IV

Rupantorer Purodha-Purush Sri Aurobindo (In Collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata) 11th December, 2021

Sri Aurobindo was considered as a truly enlightened personality who as a poet, philosopher, political thinker, mystic, polyglot and a rational critic earned respect and admiration from all classes of people.

This year, when the nation celebrates 150th birth anniversary of this extraordinary national character of India, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India initiated its endeavour to contextualise and present the diverse aspects of Sri Aurobindo to the present generation. As a part of that endeavour ISCS along with Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata, decided to jointly conduct a series of academic disquisition on him. Titled as “Rupantorer Purodha-Purush Sri Aurobindo”, this third academic deliberation of the on-going series was organised in online mode.

Moderated by Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India, this web based academic disquisition had Sri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata as its proponent and Sri Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, teacher, Uttar Garifa Pallimangal High School and member, Sri Aurobindo Samarpan Kendra, Naihati as the distinguished speaker.

The webinar commenced with the introductory note of the moderator, Sri Arindam Mukherjee who, in his deliberation highlighted the initiative of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies to organise a monthly based, year long academic disquisition on the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo in collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata

to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of this iconic personality of India. The moderator thereafter requested Sri Biswajit Ganguly to initiate his introductory note.

The distinguished proponent of this web based discourse in his short prelude introduced the speaker to the audience and briefly narrated his academic activities on Sri Aurobindo. Beside this, Sri Ganguly, in his introductory note, also stated the high level of philosophical and spiritual consciousness Sri



Aurobindo achieved in his lifetime. Interestingly, he mentioned how, after withdrawing himself from his body on 5th December, 1950, miraculously, there was no sign of decomposition in his body in the following five days, as observed by the devotees gathered in the Ashram at Pondicherry to pay their last homage to this great soul. The proponent of the webinar ended his discussion by stating that this exhibition of magnificent mystery had been achieved by Sri Aurobindo by virtue of his attainment of the highest level of consciousness and hoped that the speaker of the webinar would address this issue in detail.

According to Sri Aurobindo, “Man is a transitional being, he is not final; for in him and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees which climb to a divine super manhood.” He also stated that “Evolution is not finished; reason is neither the last word nor the reasoning animal the supreme figure of Nature. As man emerged out of the animal, so out of man the superman emerges.” The speaker of the webinar Sri Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay in his deliberation addressed this issue of gradual human evolution as viewed by Sri Aurobindo. The distinguished speaker said how Sri Aurobindo and Holy Mother were working on the next evolutionary step, the triple transformation that began with psychic transformation followed by spiritual transformation and finally attained super mental transformation. Sri Mukhopadhyay stated that Sri Aurobindo believed that Supramental Consciousness was the ultimate goal of the Integral Yoga. In his disquisition, the speaker mentioned that Sri Aurobindo believed that in ancient India, the Rishis were able to attain this consciousness but it failed to percolate down to the ordinary humans because the path to achieve it, was unknown. The distinguished speaker opined that Sri Aurobindo and Holy Mother, through their endeavour, tried to descend the super mind into terrestrial life. He ended his discussion by highlighting the supreme sacrifice of Sri Aurobindo for the evolution of the ordinary being.

The session was thereafter opened for questions, comments from the audience. Few questions were raised which were adequately answered by the speaker.

The web based disquisition ended with the vote of thanks by the moderator who, on behalf of the organiser thanked the speaker and the audience for being part of this discussion.

Webinar-V

Sri Aurobindo Srimayer Siksa Chintar Prayog

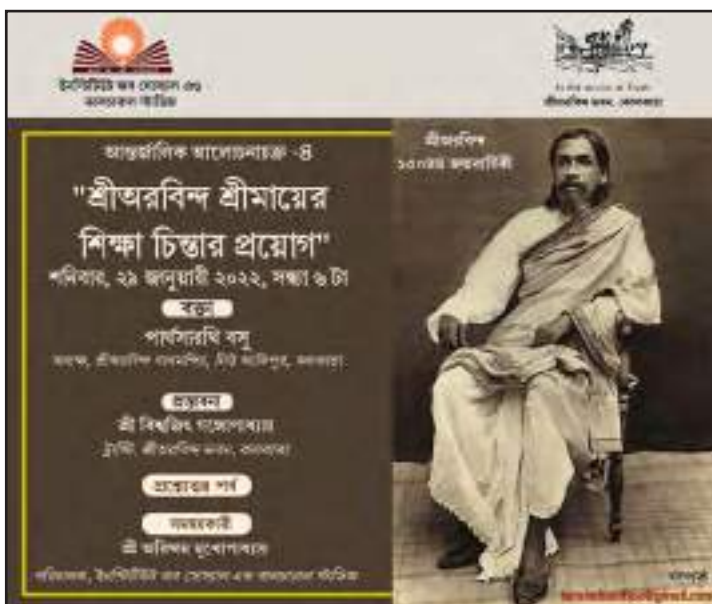
(In Collaboration with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata)

29th January, 2022

The period when nation celebrates 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India initiated its endeavour to contextualise and present diverse aspects of Sri. Aurobindo to the present generation. As a part of that endeavour, ISCS along with Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata, decided to jointly conduct a series of academic disquisition on him. Titled as “Sri Aurobindo Srimayer Siksa Chintar Prayog”, the fourth academic deliberation of the on-going series was organised in online mode.

The discussion was moderated by Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India, and received participation of Sri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata and Partha Sarathi Basu, Principal, Sri Aurobindo Bal Mandir, New Alipore, Kolkata as the distinguished speaker. The web based discussion emanated with a welcome address of Biswajit Ganguly who described that the proposed webinar would portray the ideology of Sri Aurobindo on the education system of our nation. The distinguished speaker also mentioned that the core idea of Sri Aurobindo with regard to education is to scaffold students about morals and ethics of livelihood, garner knowledge to contribute towards the development of the society rather than to learn merely with an objective of utilitarian benefit.

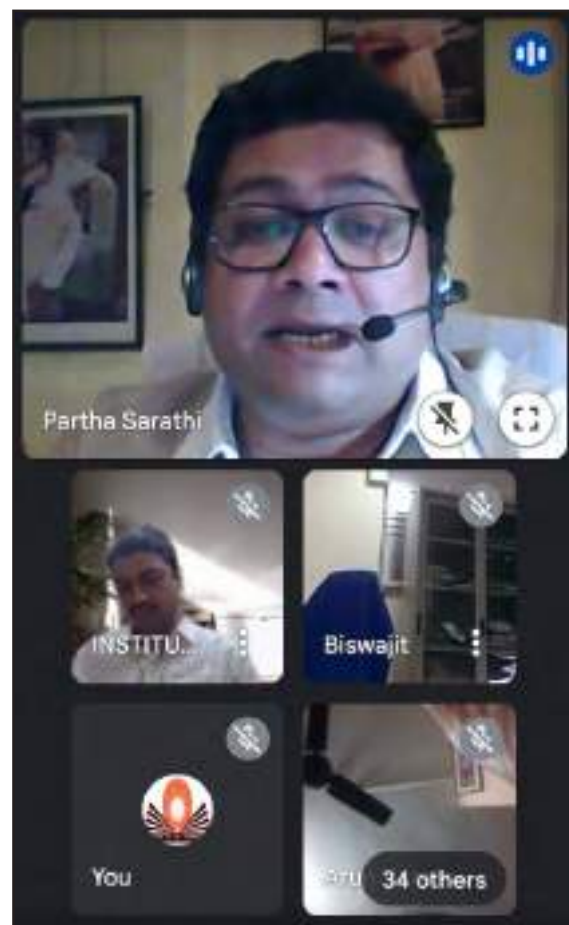
The Speaker also emphasized that Sri Aurobindo always emphasized on self-interests of the students. He believed that the teacher or mentor should first identify the inclinations and interests of the students and considering their interests should reorient the syllabus. As there are individual differences and different adaptive abilities amongst the students, hence Sri Aurobindo believed on the axiom that student should be inspired to seek interests in life, work and knowledge. Unless and until students gains subsequent interests in life, environment, ambience, his/her knowledge will be



Annual Report (2021-2022)

of no use in life. Therefore, instead of classroom learning if students are often taken to fields and are exposed to practical experiments, it would be more fruitful as it would help to grapple knowledge fast and learning would become more interesting for them. With regards to existing situation when students, due to pandemic are restricted to online learning, teachers should take the initiative to take photographs, develop small videos and share with students. So that students, while learning a particular topic can also relate with objects, features, characteristics of the same. Moreover, those classes should be made more interactive, more of a teacher student-correspondence in order to bridge the gap between mere learning and enhancement of knowledge. Most importantly, physical exercise of students should be made mandatory as it will help students to prevent disease, illness and other complications. Finally, Sri Aurobindo highlighted that refinement of emotions through drawing, drama, music is also important for the students. Refinement of emotion or emotional coaching is important for the development of mind, conscience and soul.

The discussion took very interesting turns especially during the interactive sessions where numerous academicians compared the existing education framework with the ideas or the characteristics of education as defined by Sri Aurobindo. Participants felt the need for reformation of certain contemporary educational trends to accelerate the inner transformation of the students with their academic and professional pursuits of the future.



Webinar on Janma Sardha-Satabarse Sarala Debi 21st September, 2021

19th Century Bengal saw the emergence of a galaxy of eminent personalities who played significant roles in the nation making process of modern India. Sarala Devi Chaudhurani was one of such personalities who, through her endeavors, had garnered respect and admiration of Indian masses. Born on 9th September 1872, in Calcutta, to a renowned Bengali family, Sarala Devi was the daughter of Janakinath Ghosal, secretary of the then Bengal Congress and Swarnakumari Devi, an eminent woman novelist of Bengali literature and editor of the famous Bharati Patrika.

Sarala Devi completed her education from Calcutta University, from where she passed B.A. Examination in English literature. She was among the few women graduates of her time as it was still a taboo for women to receive education like the males. She was an exceptional student and received the Padmavati Gold Medal for her excellence.

Sarala Devi was an ardent patriot. She was the first women political leader from Bengal who actively participated in the Indian independence movement. She was an eminent feminist who promoted female education and worked for the upliftment of the Indian women through her organization Bharat Shree Mahamandal. Sarala Devi was also a prolific writer who edited a number of Journals including Bharati. She was also a good singer and had composed many nationalistic songs.

On the 150th birth anniversary year of Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, which since its inception had carried out systematic academic inquest on noted Bengali personalities of

nineteenth century who played important roles in shaping Indian Nationalism, organized a meaningful academic web based disquisition highlighting various aspects of this famous patriot of India. Moderated by eminent academicians, Tapati Mukhopadhyay, former Vice-Chancellor of Sidhu-Kano-Birsha University, Purulia and Library Secretary and Trustee Member, Asiatic Society, the webinar had eminent speakers like Dr. Sanat Kumar Naskar, Professor, Department of Bengali Language and literature, University of Calcutta, Sri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan and Dr. Rakhi Mitra, Assistant Professor and HOD, Department of



Political Science, Sree Chaitanya College, Habra.

The webinar commenced with the formal introduction of Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies who introduced the moderator and the speakers to the august audience of the webinar and briefly narrated the objective of the current webinar. He thereafter asked the moderator to assume the responsibility of conducting the web based academic disquisition.

Music has always been an important aspect in the lives of Indian people. It has historically given unity to Indian society and civilization. Acknowledging this significance of music the moderator opined that the webinar should commence its journey with the presentation of a nationalistic song. She requested Srimati Sarmista Dutta, eminent researcher, Rabindra Sangeet singer and Principal of Shree Vidyaniketan school, to present a song. Srimati Dutta sang a patriotic song written and composed by Rabindranath Tagore. The musical presentation was followed by a brief introductory note of the moderator where she stated that often historical narratives did not provide due space to the endeavour initiated by the women and in this context, this current webinar held immense significance which aimed to discuss various aspects of an important women patriot and social reformer, Sarala Devi Chaudhurani on her 150th birth anniversary. Specifying her as the epitome of courage and independence the distinguished speaker highlighted the domain of Sarala Devi's endeavour that extended from Bengal to faraway Punjab. According to Professor Mukhopadhyay, Sarala Devi, who was born at a crucial juncture of Bengal's social transformation in a family of eminent personalities, through her plethora of endeavours, played a key role in the nation building process of India. She commented that Sarala Devi's endeavour exhibited the spirit of nationalism and anti-imperialism. She thereafter requested the eminent speakers of the webinar to highlight various aspects of this famous personality in their presentations.

Professor Sanat Kumar Naskar in his presentation discussed Sarala Devi's contribution in the field of literature, music and social reform. The distinguished speaker initiated her discussion by stating how Sarala Devi was born during a crucial stage of social transformation in Bengal. He thereafter highlighted the early childhood years of Sarala Devi and mentioned how, since her childhood, she exhibited her literary talents through her writings in various Bengali periodicals like Balak, Sakha etc. The speaker in his discussion mentioned how her childhood writings garnered praise from noted people like Gobindo Dutta. He added that as Sarala Devi grew up, she played an important role as the editor of Bharati Patrika from 1899-1907 and 1924-26. The distinguished speaker also discussed her achievement as a musician and a singer mentioning how she composed music to a number of songs written by her maternal uncle Rabindranath Tagore, wrote and composed music of several nationalistic songs which were widely acclaimed.

Sarala Devi was a motivator and a reformist. She, through her activities, inspired the youths of the country. The distinguished speaker mentioned how, by organizing festivals like Pratapaditya Utsav, Udayaditya Utsav and Birastami Utsav she had inspired the youths, infused nationalistic feelings within them and inspired them to achieve self-reliance.

The distinguished speaker also mentioned how Sarala Devi worked hard to unshackle the women

of the nineteenth century India from the clutches of patriarchal domination. He highlighted how Sarala Devi, through her organization Bharat Shree Mahamandal, not only imparted education to the women, but carried out many activities through which women could achieve their desire of self-reliance and respect within the society.

In the concluding part of his deliberation professor Naskar discussed why and how Sarala Devi got attracted to the world of spiritualism.

Sarala Devi was one of those rare Indian personalities of the nineteenth century who had close relations with numerous noted personalities of her time that included Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, theosophist Henry Olcott, H.P. Blavatsky, Sir John Woodroffe etc. Acknowledging this fact, the subsequent speaker Biswajit Ganguly commented that by analyzing Sarala Devi Chaudhurani it was possible to get a glimpse of the thoughts exhibited by numerous eminent personalities of the nineteenth century. However the distinguished speaker opined that though Sarala Devi contributed in various areas ranging from the youth movement, women's education, literature, music and religious reform movement yet her impact in this area remained very limited. He thereafter enlightened the audience by discussing Sarala Devi's relationship with three of her contemporary noted personalities namely Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. While discussing her relation with Sister Nivedita the distinguished speaker discussed how the initial cordial relation between both became critical at the later stage. The distinguished speaker also mentioned how Swami Vivekananda expressed high hope on Sarala Devi's endeavours.

In the concluding part of his deliberation Sri Ganguly discussed Sarala Devi's relationship with Sri Aurobindo which he divided broadly into two phases. In the initial phase Sarala Devi came in contact with Sri Aurobindo when both had worked in the kingdom of Baroda. However, he interestingly mentioned that despite past connection Aurobindo never showed any eagerness to collaborate with Sarala Devi when he came to Bengal after 1905 and plunged into the national freedom struggle.

In 1920's when Sarala Devi was actively assisting Mahatma Gandhi in spreading the national liberation movement in Punjab, she again came to Pondicherry to meet Sri Aurobindo and also to discuss about the possible road map for the national liberation struggle. The distinguished speaker beautifully analyzed the correspondence that took place between Aurobindo and Sarala Devi in that period.

The last speaker of the session, Dr. Rakhi Mitra in her disquisition focused on the political endeavour of Sarala Devi Chaudhurani. She initiated her presentation by giving a short sketch of Sarala Devi's early life, thereafter, she discussed Sarala Devi's inspirational role as a nationalistic singer, musician and song composer. In the due course of her discussion Dr. Mitra explained how the prolific writings of Sarala Devi as the editor of Bharati infused nationalistic feeling among the ordinary Indian mass. She also mentioned how this ardent patriot by organizing various festivals inspired and awakened the youths of the country about their national duty to emancipate their motherland from foreign domination. She added

Annual Report (2021-2022)

that such initiative of Sarala Devi received high acclamation from the contemporary native newspapers and periodicals of Bengal.

Dr. Mitra in the subsequent part of her deliberations stated how Sarala Devi was instrumental in uplifting the revolutionary spirit of Indian masses assisting her associates in building revolutionary organizations. She added that Sarala Devi had close connections with various revolutionary organizations like the Dacca Anushilan Samiti, Suhrid Samiti and Deepali Sangha. She concluded her deliberation by highlighting how difference between Sarala Devi and her associates on the issue of conducting political dacoity led her dissociation from the revolutionary activities in Bengal.

The academic disquisition ended with the concluding observation of the moderator who thanked the speakers for their well informative presentations. However, she opined that some key aspects of Sarala Devi Chaudhurani like her role in the upliftment of women remained largely untouched in this web based disquisition.

She concluded by saying that during an age when women largely confined themselves between the four walls of the house Sarala Devi emerged as a courageous woman patriot inspiring the common mass specially youth and women to attain self reliance and to plunge into the struggle against autocratic British hegemony.

The webinar ended with the vote of thanks by Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. He expressed his gratitude to the moderator for conducting the webinar and the distinguished speakers for their wonderful presentations.



Moderator : Prof. Tapati Mukhopadhyay



Speaker : Sanat Kumar Naskar



Speaker : Biswajit Ganguly



Singer : Sarmista Dutta

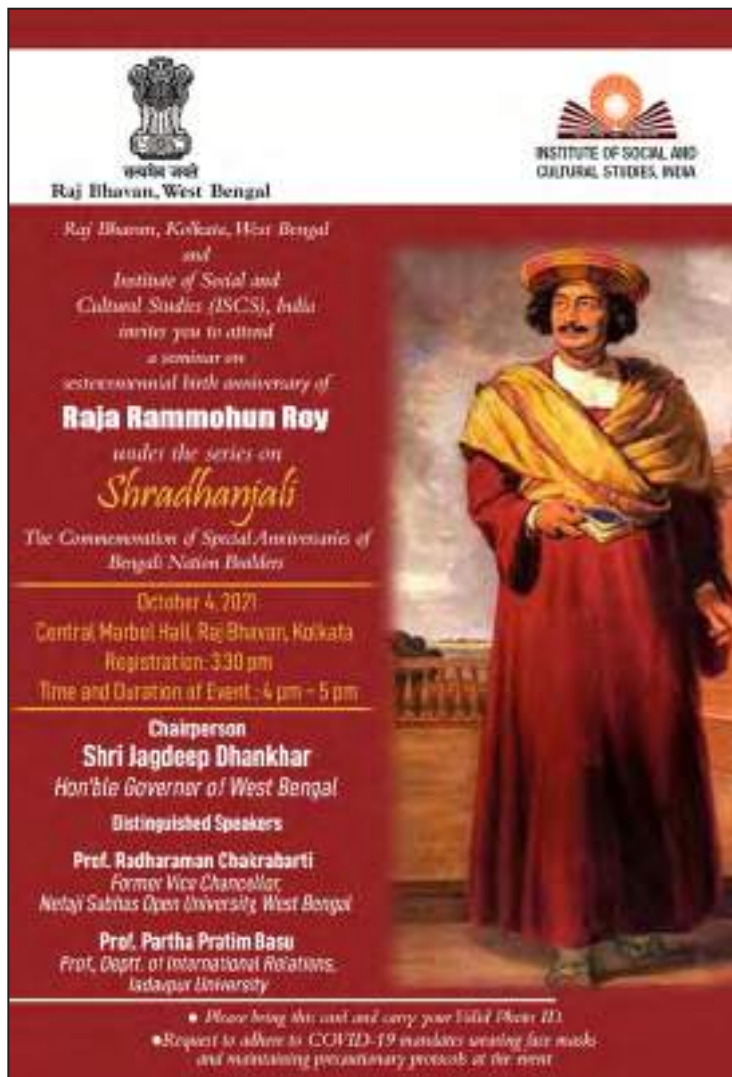
Sestercentennial Birth Anniversary of Raja Rammohun Roy The Commemoration of Special Anniversaries of Bengali Nation Builders

Under the series

“Shradhanjali”

(In Collaboration with Raj Bhavan, Kolkata)

4th October, 2021; Venue : Raj Bhavan, Kolkata



Raja Rammohun Roy was regarded as an outstanding personality of pre-independent India. Known as the father of modern India, he was acknowledged for initiating the age of enlightenment and liberal-reformist modernisation in India.

This year as the country vows together to celebrate the 250th Birth Anniversary of Raja Rammohun Roy, Institute of Social and Cultural studies which, since its inception, had been carrying out academic inquest on the lives and activities of eminent Bengali personalities of British India, decided to commemorate the Sestercentennial Birth Anniversary of this great social reformer by organising an academic deliberation over his life and activities under the series Shradhanjali on 4th October, 2021, at the Central Marble Hall, Raj Bhavan, Kolkata. Chaired by Honourable Governor of West Bengal, H.E, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar the seminar had two distinguished speakers, Prof. Radharaman Chakrabarti, Former Vice

Annual Report (2021-2022)



Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal and Prof. Partha Pratim Basu, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University.

The programme commenced with the welcome address of Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. In his presentation of a brief sketch of the life and activities of Raja Rammohun Roy he hoped that the eminent speakers present in the podium would enlighten the august

audience about the various known and unknown facts and endeavours associated with this great social reformer. The welcome address was followed by the opening remarks of the honourable Governor of West Bengal, H.E, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar who initiated his deliberation by mentioning the significance of culture in our national life. He also acknowledged the importance of Bengal which had been the epicentre of the cultural evolution in modern India. Referring Rammohun Roy as a visionary he urged the august gathering to follow his thoughts.

The first speaker of the seminar Prof. Partha Pratim Basu initiated his presentation where he discussed the role of Raja Rammohun Roy as a nation builder and his contribution in the contemporary Indian society.

He meaningfully discussed Rammohun's thoughts of Indian nation and the controversy associated with it. Subsequently, the distinguished speaker discussed how Rammohun's thoughts on several political, economic, religious and gender issues have greater relevance in the contemporary world.

The subsequent speaker Prof. Radharaman Chakrabarti initiated his presentation by narrating the problems and social obstacles Rammohun Roy had to face to pursue his aim. Terming him as a visionary and pathfinder, the honourable speaker highlighted how Raja Rammohun Roy was



Annual Report (2021-2022)

successful in compelling the British rulers to carry out endeavours which they never intended to do. In the subsequent part of his address, Prof. Chakrabarti discussed Rammohun's role in mitigating the agricultural crisis in Bengal and reconstructing the economy of Bengal. According to the distinguished speaker, Raja Rammohun Roy understood that successful management of economy gave legitimacy to the government and was able to make the British lawmakers understand the disastrous effect of the Permanent Settlement in India and advised them for necessary agricultural reforms. He also added how Rammohun Roy even thought about the nascent industrial venture of Bengal by supporting and even providing steady flow of capital for the recapitalisation of the native industry, raising his voice in support of a level playing field for native and foreign traders, facilitating a free native print media which provided a platform for the publicity of the new products produced by the local industries and above all carrying out endeavours to promote modern, rational and scientific education for creating an efficient human capital for the industry. Acknowledging Rammohun Roy's contribution the esteemed speaker concluded his discussion by terming him as the father of modern India.



From (L to R) : Prof. Partha Pratim Basu and Prof. Radharaman Chakrabarti



Central Marbel Hall, Raj Bhavan, Kolkata

Annual Report (2021-2022)

CONNECT TO RECONNECT



Connect to Reconnect-(Chapter IV) International Disquisitions on Indo-Vietnam Conjunctions (In Collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs, Branch Secretariat, Kolkata) 6th May, 2021

South East Asia has always been an important aspect of Indian foreign policy. Initiation of the “Look East Policy” and the subsequent “Act East Policy” by the present Indian government manifests its keenness towards this region. Comprehending the significance of this newly adopted policy of the Indian government, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies initiated meaningful virtual academic disquisitions under the series titled “Connect to Reconnect” with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Branch Secretariat office, Kolkata addressing India’s relationship with Vietnam, an important nation in the South East Asia.

The fourth chapter of the series titled “India – Vietnam Conjunctions” took place on 6th May 2021. Moderated by Ambassador Preeti Saran, Former Secretary(East) Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Former Indian Ambassador to Vietnam, the panel included distinguished speakers like H.E. Pranay Verma, Ambassador of India to Vietnam, Dr. Ton Sinh Thanh, Former Ambassador and member of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Captain (IN) Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation and Adjunct Professor, New Delhi Institute of Management and Mr. Do Thanh Hai, Councillor Vietnam embassy in India.

The webinar commenced with the introductory note of Kankana Roy of ISCS, who narrated the objective of the present series of the webinar and thereafter requested the moderator Ambassador Ms. Preeti Saran to initiate the academic disquisition.



Ambassador Preeti Saran initiated her introductory note by expressing her gratitude towards the organisers for organising an academic discourse in the form of a webinar on the various aspects of India-Vietnam bilateral relationship. Her initial deliberation centred round the virtual summit of 21st December 2020 which was attended by Indian Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi and his counterpart from Vietnam, H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc. She explained the significance of the virtual summit and its impact over the growing bilateral relations. Mentioning the issue of the global pandemic that had engulfed the entire world she highlighted how it had adversely affected the Indo-Vietnamese bilateral relationship. However she added that at present both the countries were collaborating with each other to fight against the growing impact of Covid-19. She also hoped that like past both the countries would emerge stronger after such adversity. Her deliberation thereafter focused on the military and strategic cooperation between the two countries. In her discourse she opined that such cooperation had contributed largely in establishing peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. In the due course of her deliberation she highlighted the potentiality of the bilateral trade and economic relations between India and Vietnam which had recently surpassed 10 billion U.S. dollars. She also identified areas like exploration of hydrocarbon sources, renewable energy, agriculture, agro-processing, Information and Technology, Telecom, Automobiles, Textiles and Pharmaceuticals where both the countries could enhance their trade and cooperation initiatives. She concluded her introductory note by saying that while both the countries were celebrating their 5th year of comprehensive strategic partnership and 50th year of diplomatic relationship, it was necessary that both the countries would work more closely both in regional and international forums. She thereafter requested Mr. Do Thanh Hai to initiate his presentation. Mr. Do Thanh Hai's presentation focused on the development of the bilateral relationship between India and Vietnam and the possible way forward of this relation. The distinguished speaker initiated his presentation by highlighting the deep civilizational and cultural linkages both the countries shared since the ancient times, specially mentioning the kingdom of Champa in Vietnam which drew its cultural inspiration from India. He said that this linkage remained through ages and in the modern era the same had grown even stronger. In his deliberation he pointed out how India had been supportive towards Vietnam's struggle for Independence and Vietnam's initiative to resolve the Cambodian crisis. He opined that the bilateral relationship between the two countries is based on a



H.E. Mr. Pranay Verma

strong foundation and pointed out that both the countries had upgraded their relationship into a comprehensive strategic partnership. He said that though bilateral relationship had received a major setback due to the outbreak of the global pandemic yet both the countries shared a strong economic and investment relationship. In the due course of his discussion he also emphasized on the development of tourism and people to people contact between both the countries in the post pandemic scenario. The distinguished

speaker thereafter focused his discourse on the future of the bilateral relationship and mentioned the recent joint vision document signed by the leadership of both the countries, where it was decided that both the countries would cooperate with each other in the field of defence, trade, science, technology and energy. He also opined the necessity of increasing people to people contact that could help the people of both nations understand the civilizational linkages between both the countries. He concluded his deliberation by stating that people of both the countries had very little knowledge about each other and opined that a strong institutional mechanism is needed in this regard. The next speaker Ambassador Pranay Verma focused his discourse on



H.E. Mr. Pham Sanh Chau

connectivity which he termed as one of the significant aspects of the bilateral relations. He opined that historically both the countries were well connected and also added that the necessity to take a holistic view on connectivity which incorporated digital, economic, cultural, social and institutional connectivity. In his deliberation he spoke on the political connectivity between both the countries which gradually boosted through regular exchanges of phone calls between the Prime Ministers of the respective countries, institutional dialogue between the foreign ministers and defence ministers of both the nations. He opined that the joint vision that was published after the virtual summit of 21st December, 2020, rather than a joint statement showed the eagerness of both the nations to establish a robust bilateral relation. He thereafter focused his discussion on the defence cooperation between India and Vietnam where he highlighted various initiatives taken by both the nations to strengthen their defence cooperation.

On the issue of economic and trade relationship he pointed out how Covid-19 forced both the countries to explore new avenues in the field of Business and economic cooperation. Ambassador Verma, during his discourse also touched the issue of cultural cooperation and showed how both the countries were cooperating in the conservation of the shared heritage. In his presentation he also laid importance over the societal connection between both the countries through a growing Indian diaspora in Vietnam and people to people contact especially through the youths of both the countries. The last part of his deliberation focused on the issue of digital connectivity where he analysed the importance of initiatives like e-certificate, virtual business etc. He commented that the digital connectivity was a fundamental pillar of an effective bilateral relation. He concluded his presentation by stating that as India and Vietnam were celebrating the 5th year of Comprehensive Strategic partnership and fifty years of diplomatic relation, both the nations must lay emphasis over the above stated issues to build a strong and effective bilateral relationship. The subsequent speaker of the webinar, Dr. Ton Sinh Thanh focused his discussion on the physical connectivity between India and Vietnam. According to the speaker North East India, located at

an equidistance between Indian capital Delhi and Vietnam capital Ho Chi Minh city could emerge as a significant player in developing India-Vietnam physical connectivity. In his discourse, he mentioned that the commencement of the direct flight between India and Vietnam had contributed significantly in the development of physical connectivity between the two nations. He also mentioned that in recent past sea connectivity between India and Vietnam had improved significantly leading to a more close maritime connectivity between the two nations. He also emphasised the development of land connectivity and hoped for an extension of the trilateral Asian Highway between India-Myanmar-Thailand up to Vietnam. He also mentioned the possibility of rail connectivity between the two nations in the coming future. He mentioned the importance of digital connectivity which, according to him, had increased significantly during the pandemic days. He concluded by mentioning that though favourable conditions remained there for the further development of bilateral relationship between the two countries, yet delay in the implementation of the projects and bureaucratic hurdles remained the major obstacles for a further developed bilateral relation between India and Vietnam in the future. The last speaker of the webinar Mr. Alok Bansal initiated his discourse by highlighting the 2000 years old civilizational linkages between India and Vietnam. He also opined that though often people thought India-Vietnam relation through the prism of Buddhism, however according to the distinguished speaker there also remained a huge link of Hinduism between the two nations. He added that the temple complex of the Cham kingdom revealed how Hinduism linked India with Vietnam. In his presentation the distinguished speaker stated that even before Vietnam became independent, it had been in regular communication with India and the first Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru had established close relation with the revolutionary leader of Vietnam Ho-Chi Minh. He also analysed how the two countries over few decades had developed their relationships which led India to be the fourth country in the world with whom Vietnam had a comprehensive strategic partnership. The eminent speaker, in his presentation, also highlighted the decade old defence collaboration between the two countries and how it had progressed and achieved a new height. He emphasised the necessity of an overland connectivity and pointed out the significance of extending the Asian trilateral highway up to Vietnam. He also pointed out that the commencement of direct flight between India and Vietnam would help both the countries. He opined that due to the operation of direct



Captain (IN) Alok Bansal

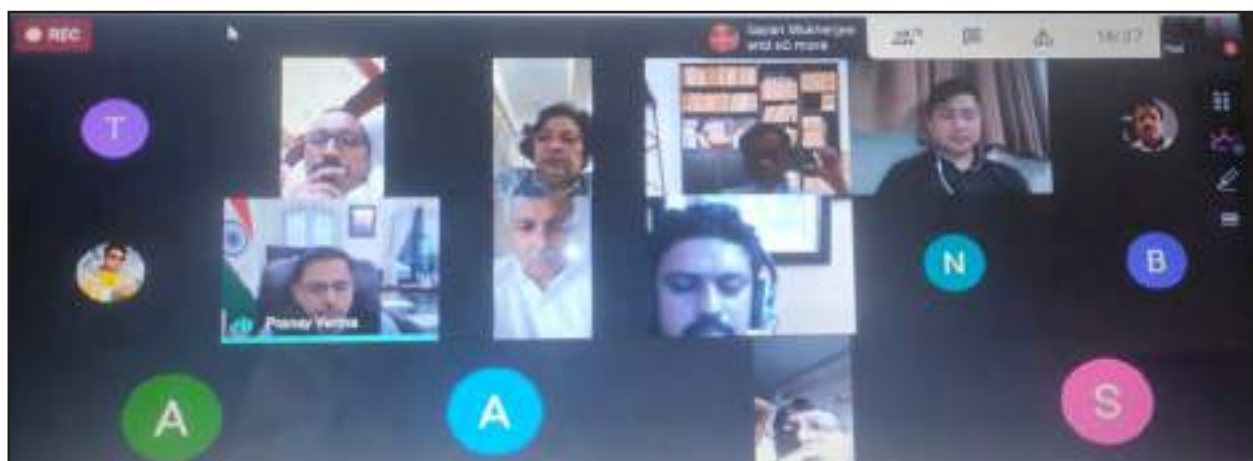
flight tourist inflows from India to Vietnam had increased and in future tourist outflows from Vietnam to India would also increase, resulting in a possibility of more direct people to people contact. He also emphasised the role of the youth in developing people to people contact. The distinguished speaker also addressed the issue of Maritime trade between India and Vietnam and analysed how both the countries were working together to establish the notion of freedom of navigation even in the contested areas of

Annual Report (2021-2022)

South China Sea. He concluded his presentation pointing out how both the countries were working together in the Indo-Pacific region on blue economy, maritime security and maritime connectivity.

After the deliberation of the distinguished speakers, the moderator of the webinar opened the session for questions and comments from the audience. A number of important questions were raised and were adequately replied by the speakers.

The question and answer session was followed by a vote of thanks which was delivered by Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India, who, on behalf of the organisers thanked the Moderator, and the distinguished speakers, for their valuable deliberations.



International Disquisitions
Connect to Reconnect (Chapter V)
Indo-Thai Conflux
(In Collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs,
Branch Secretariat, Kolkata)
9th July, 2021

India always enjoys deep historical, socio-cultural and economic ties with south East Asian countries. As a result this region finds a significant place in Indian foreign policy. The keen interest of India towards the countries of south East Asia has been reflected through various policies initiated by the Government of India like the Look East and the Act East Policy. Keeping this in mind Institute of Social and Cultural Studies had initiated a series of meaningful academic discourses titled “Connect to Reconnect” with Ministry of External Affairs, Branch Secretariat, to discuss India’s relations with its neighbours.

The fifth chapter of the series titled “Indo-Thai Conflux” took place on 9th July, 2021. Moderated by Ambassador Anil Wadhwa, Former Ambassador from India to Thailand, it had a distinguished panel of speakers like H.E. Mrs. Pattarat Hongtong, Ambassador of Thailand to India, H.E. Mrs. Suchitra Durai, Ambassador of India to Thailand, Prof. Surat Horachaikul, Director, India Studies Centre, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand and Prof. Ishani Naskar, Dept. of International Relations, Jadavpur University. The webinar commenced with an introductory note from Ms. Kankana Roy who appraised the audience about the plethora of endeavours undertaken by the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and the objective of the present series of webinar and subsequently requested the moderator to initiate the programme. The webinar was initiated by Ambassador Anil Wadhwa. In his informative introductory note the former diplomat highlighted the deep rooted ties between India and Thailand in multidimensional terms. He commented that both India and Thailand had compatible policies like India’s Looking East and Thailand’s Looking West Policies which resulted in building a very comprehensive relationship. He also briefly mentioned few regional and sub-regional initiatives like India-ASEAN framework, East Asian Summit, ARF, BIMSTEC, Mekong-Ganga cooperation where both the countries were working together. Besides this he mentioned about the deep cultural and religious ties that both countries enjoyed since ancient times. In his introductory address he touched the vital issue of bilateral economic cooperation by mentioning the India-ASEAN free trade agreement and Services and Investment Agreement where both nations were signatories. He mentioned how several institutional infrastructures facilitated smooth functioning of bilateral dialogues between India and Thailand.

His disquisition shows how improved bilateral connectivity had a positive impact on the movement of tourists in the respective countries. He mentioned how the royal family of Thailand was closely related



with various cultural and educational initiatives in India. At the end of his address, the distinguished moderator outlined few areas like the issue of connectivity, trade and investment, education, defence and security cooperation and requested the speakers to educate the audience about these issues through their expertness. He thereafter asked the first distinguished panellist Ambassador Pattarat Hongtong to initiate her presentation. Ambassador Pattarat Hongtong initiated her disquisition by mentioning the deep historical, cultural and religious connection that both the countries shared since the past. The main part of her disquisition focused on how the conflux between the two countries could be improved in future. She vividly analysed the factors like improvement of infrastructure, streamlining of various rules and regulations for promoting trade and business and the necessity of people to people contacts in developing the long standing bilateral relation between India and Thailand. Discussing on the issue of infrastructure and connectivity she analysed various aspects of India's land connectivity with Thailand and South East Asia in general under regional initiatives like BIMSTEC. She hoped that as the next chairman of BIMSTEC, Thailand would play an important role in developing land connectivity with India through such sub-regional initiatives. She highlighted the significance of the proposed trilateral highway between India-Thailand-Myanmar and

discussed the development of the BIMSTEC's master plan for transport and connectivity which could help India to connect itself with south East Asian nations through Thailand. In her deliberation she addressed the issue of Mekong-Ganga cooperation and a new motor vehicle agreement that would help to develop connectivity between the two nations. In the due course of her disquisition she commented that the development of land connectivity would help in boosting the volume of trade and tourism in particular. On sea connectivity, she said that the sea routes since ancient times had been the pathway through which cultural, economic and religious connectivity were established between India and other countries of south East Asia. She discussed the significance of connecting various ports of India and Thailand while analysing the MOU signed by the two governments connecting Kolkata, Vishakhapatnam and Chennai port with that of Ranong port of Thailand under the BIMSTEC initiative. She said that such

bilateral agreement would increase the volume of trade between the two countries and would also cut the transportation period. She hoped that through the ASEAN-India framework both India and Thailand could use sea in a more constructive and sustainable way. She also hoped that such mutual agreement like the Coastal Shipping Agreement would ease the flow of trade through the seas. The next issue that came up in her deliberation was the issue of streamlining existing rules and regulations associated with trade, investment and business. She added that the above could be achieved through political will and internal reforms and synchronisation of dialogue between both India and Thailand which would help them to know about the reforms of rules and regulation undertaken by the respective nations. She also briefly mentioned the role of smart technology in streamlining the rules and regulations. The last part of her deliberation focused on the issue of people to people contact. She discussed how necessary steps were required to be taken by both India and Thailand to increase people to people contact especially for students. She pointed out the significance of the increased number of Indian and Thai tourists in both the countries. The distinguished speaker also spoke about the positive consequence of business exchange and identified the avenues where increase in investment by both India and Thailand can happen. She highlighted the necessity of technical cooperation in the field of science and technology, smart start-ups etc. She ended her deliberation with a positive hope that the long diplomatic relationship between India and Thailand would be able to sustain the obstacles presented by the global pandemic and India would celebrate her 75th anniversary in the coming year wholeheartedly. The subsequent speaker Ambassador Suchitra Durai in her discussion, addressed issues related to historical connectivity, people to people contact, infrastructural development and digital connectivity. She started her discussion by analysing the long historical connectivity between India and Thailand, mentioned how the modern Thai language incorporated words from Indian languages like Pali, Sanskrit, Bengali and Tamil. In her deliberation she mentioned about the Thirudi community of Tamil Nadu who had settled in Thailand in the ancient past and also about the growing modern Indian Diaspora in Thailand which was more than 150 years old. The distinguished speaker mentioned the visit of Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi in Thailand during the East Asian Summit in 2019, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's visit to India in 2016 and 2019 and the royal visit of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and Princess Chulaborn and the frequent high level political visits between the two countries. On the issue of bilateral defence cooperation she mentioned the MOU on defence cooperation in 2012, various staff talks, training programs, joint exercises, defence production and procurement to name a few. Describing the economic exchange between the two countries as the heart of the bilateral relation, the distinguished speaker presented a robust bilateral trade relation which surpassed 12 billion dollars in 2019, which though came down in 2020 but rose back during the two quarters of 2021. In course of her deliberation she analysed the issue of growing bilateral investment and pressed the necessity of streamlining of procedure. The next issue touched by the speaker was on connectivity where she stated that recent flow of air traffic between India and Thailand was about 300 flights from 17 destinations. She stated that improved connectivity had resulted in more tourist inflow. She also mentioned about the regular cultural exchange between the two countries like the Festival of India in Bangkok 2016, regular exchange of cultural troops etc. She also analysed the significance of educational exchange, by stating about Indian students placed in different Thai academic institutions.

She also mentioned about the various university-level educational scholarship programmes and short term training programmes offered by India to the Thai students highlighting the ASEAN-Indian PhD fellowship programme which was offered to the students of the ten ASEAN countries. She not only educated the audience about the past history and the present situation of the Thai students studying in India but drew a clear picture of Indian students studying in various parts of Thailand. Mentioning the inclusion of Thai language in the schools of India under the new education policy she tried to portray how India acknowledged the significance of Thai culture. Subsequently, she discussed about the infrastructure, digital connectivity which she commented as the heart of India's Act East Policy and the Vision of Indo-Pacific Policy as outlined by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the Shangri-La dialogue of June 2018. The distinguished speaker mentioned about the Air connectivity and the Sea connectivity under the India Pacific ocean initiative declared by Prime Minister Modi during the 14th East Asian Summit in November 2019. She discussed about the MOU signed with the Ranong port of Thailand and the four major ports of Eastern India and hoped that it would help in the establishment of direct shipping connectivity between India and Thailand. Speaking on the issue of land connectivity she meaningfully analysed various issues related to the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway. She referred to the importance of digital connectivity and threw light over how both the countries could cooperate with each other in this regard.

She also drew the attention of the august audience towards the issue of tourism specially highlighting the growing importance of adventure tourism, the need to develop a Buddhist and a Ramayana Circuit in India in collaboration with other South East Asian Countries like Thailand to promote tourism. On the issue of commercial and economic cooperation she discussed how the potential large market of India could be economically beneficial for the Thai industries and how Thailand could be used by India as a potential gateway for other South East Asian nations. She added that India organised its first North East India festival in Bangkok 2019 as an acknowledgement towards the role Thailand could play in the economic prosperity of India's land locked North East. She also mentioned the regional initiatives like BIMSTEC, ASEAN, and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation where India and Thailand were closely complementing each other. The distinguished speaker concluded her disquisition by commenting that both the countries must take advantage of their geographical proximity, cultural affinity and long standing goodwill to build a better bilateral relation in the near future. She was followed by Professor Surat Horachaikul who started his deliberation by mentioning three noted Bengali personalities, namely, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Satyanand Puri and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who played an important role in reconnecting India's relation with Thailand.

Professor Horachaikul said that though India and Thailand had strong ties since ancient times, yet during the colonial period this relationship received little limelight. Though India's first Prime Minister Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru played an important role in rebuilding this relation, the spread of cold war across the globe affected this bilateral relation. He added that however people to people contact and cultural relations remained between the two countries, the situation again improved during the rule of Shri

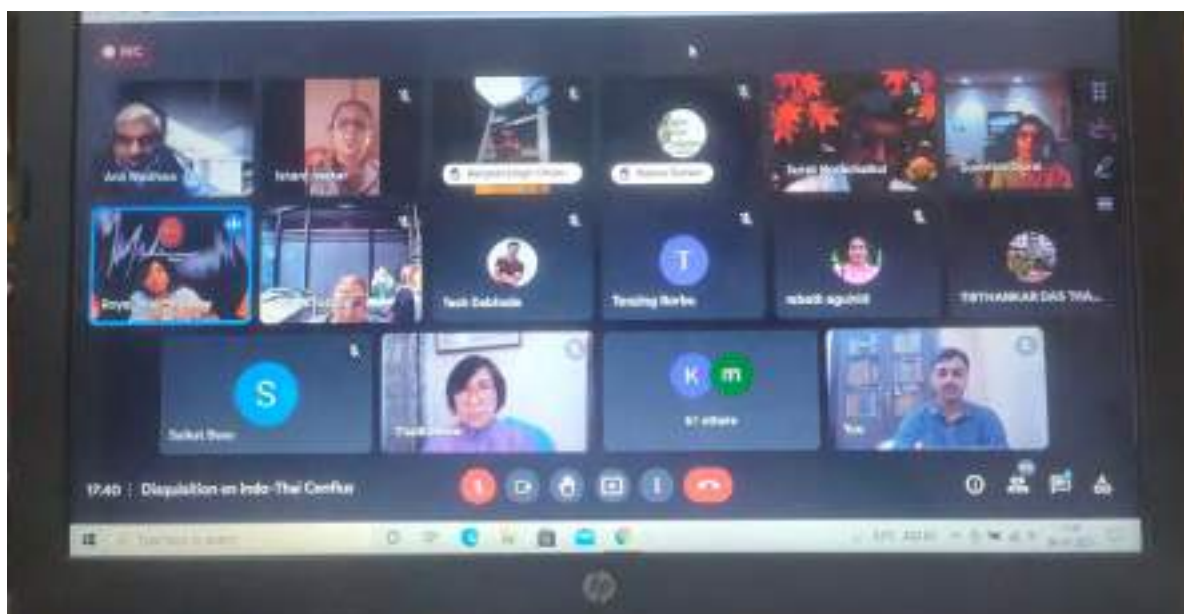
Rajib Gandhi who visited Thailand and Shri Narashima Rao who initiated the Look East Policy that was successfully continued by the present Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. In his presentation the distinguished scholar from Thailand emphasised on the role of BIMSTEC. According to him, India and Thailand should not only strengthen their relationship bilaterally but also on a regional basis through BIMSTEC. He added that there was a necessity to utilize the BIMSTEC framework to produce more tangible outcomes. In his discussion, he also spoke about films in developing cultural relationship between the two countries and highlighted the major steps taken by both nations in this regard. In the last part of his discussion the eminent panelist discussed the challenges that both the countries needed to overcome to sustain a better bilateral relation. He stressed on the need to understand each other more closely, synthesising the needs of the people of both the countries and proposed that these could be achieved through the initiatives of the Think Tanks of both the countries. He also stressed on the need to facilitate educational linkages so that people could understand each other more closely and also supported a more robust infrastructure through which exchange of knowledge could be enabled.



The last speaker of the session Professor Ishani Nashkar spoke on the security aspect of the Indo-Thai bilateral relations. The distinguished speaker started her deliberation by analysing the security aspect of the region in context of the Indo-Pacific initiatives adopted by Prime Minister Modi. She said that the historical linkages, geographical continuity made India's relationship with Thailand unique. She said that successive Indian governments had followed a steady policy to build up India's relationship with Thailand starting with the initiative of former Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajib Gandhi that continued throughout the 90's. She added that in the present millennium, the Indo-Pacific concept has become more vibrant and in this context India-Thailand bilateral relationship and India-ASEAN regional relationship became

Annual Report (2021-2022)

very important for our security cooperation. In her deliberation, she analysed the bilateral and regional security initiatives where India and Thailand could work together mentioning joint military exercise like CORPAT (2005), SIAM BHARAT, MAITREE, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2004), Mutual Extradition Treaty etc. Professor Naskar, terming terrorism as a mutual concern for both India and Thailand, stressed on the role of BIMSTEC as a strategic platform which would address the security concern of South Asia and South East Asia. She also pointed out the significance of naval exercise like MILEX and MILAN that both India and Thailand jointly carried out. The distinguished speaker also spoke about the strategic importance of IONS and IORA and the evolving geopolitical situation of this region and the joint role of India and Thailand in this regard. Soon after the deliberation of the distinguished speaker came to an end, the moderator opened the session for the participants to raise their questions and comments towards the speaker. Several important questions were raised by the audience which were adequately answered by the distinguished panellist. The programme ended with a vote of thanks from Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.



Annual Report (2021-2022)

COEVAL DISCOURSE



Coeval Discourse-VII

COVID 19 Variant: Sustainability and Management

(In Collaboration with ICCR)

10th January, 2022

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India since 2019, has been partnering with The Indian Council For Cultural Relations, ICCR, India to host a series of Talk on “Coeval Discourse” to address the views and perspectives of academicians, policy makers and ISCS’s followers on contemporary issues. On 10th of January 2022 the platform of Coeval Discourse hosted a very crucial and a timely discussion to answer questions and queries of several on how to sustain and manage our lives with the changing nature of Covid-19 variants, knocking one after the other. As the experts referred and believed that the pandemic would be with us for quite some time though its characters would continue to evolve. Therefore, the Coeval Discourse-VII on “COVID-19 Variants: Sustainability and Management” that was addressed by

R. Parthiban, Regional Director, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Kolkata. Prof. Dipankar Sengupta, Department of Economics, University of Jammu, who Chaired the session along with Distinguished Speakers Ms. Debosmita Sarkar, Research Assistant, Centre For New Economic Diplomacy (ORF), Kolkata and Dr. Sreerupa Roy, WBES, Asst. Professor, Krishnagar Government College through the discourse did put forward very interesting points on the topic and charted way forward to fight for sustainability amid the pandemic stretched for almost two years.

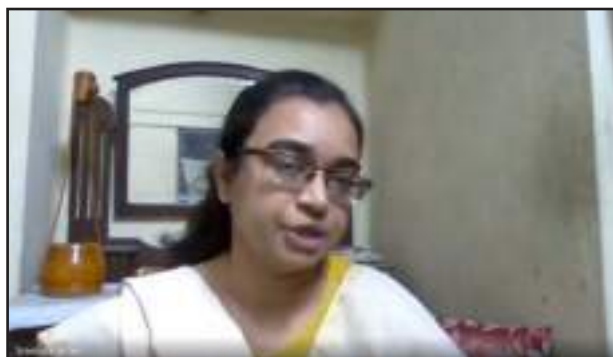
In his welcome address, R. Parthiban thanked ISCS for hosting such a timely and crucial discussion and expressed his keenness to host several such webinars in the following months. The first Distinguished Speaker Debosmita Sarkar focused how the pandemic, with its changing characters, had an overarching impact on sustainability. The Speaker mentioned that usual economic lives in most of the countries have come to a halt causing disruptions in



supply chains, leading to unemployment, health susceptibility and overall well-being. However, on a positive note, the pandemic has uplifted the healthcare sector. The pandemic has led countries to invest and focus on the growth of healthcare sector. The Speaker highlighted that incidents such as domestic violence, economic inequality have become a matter of concern; educational outcomes have also been affected severely. Although digitization has helped countries to overcome certain barriers, digital divide continues to plague and cause social divides. Therefore, for now, a seminal access to vaccination should be regarded as prime objective as vaccine coverage to most in limited time is the way to stop mutation of virus, hence along with policy design on health a network between public-private and international forums are needed to reach vaccine targets, stall variant and accede a growth based sustainable environment for future. Dr. Sreerupa Roy referred on the dystrophies of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, especially micro units in certain districts of West Bengal. The variants have indulged in weaving looms causing unemployment. Though some got involved into agricultural sector, but backwardness and challenges in the agricultural sector caused a harsh effect on the sustainable living of many labourers. Therefore, it is time for the society to appraise and acknowledge the fact that an alternate system of employment should be developed through digitization, easy bank and loan system, policy cohesiveness are needed to reduce hurdles of many daily wage labourers who are forced to adopt an alternative form of employment in any such crisis as we are facing now-a-days. Also regional disparity, gender insensitivity and ecology, topographical issues should be kept in mind when we frame entrepreneurship and policy framework for coming years. The government should extend support, make policy guidelines easy that help labourers switching from a certain specific pattern of wage earning mode to another. Prof. Dipankar Sengupta, the Chair of the webinar, as part of his address, remarked that it is not about collaborating and building infrastructure but it is time for the govt. of India or economy of the country to ramp up its production capacity and tailoring of policy keeping practicability in mind and also experiences. Digital folding is important and technology and its infrastructure in whichever state it has been, had helped country to sail through the crisis of the pandemic. But again wielding of such digitization into informal sector should be symmetrical. Followed to remarks a discussion session was initiated amongst the audience and Distinguished Speakers. The vote of thanks was extended by Sri Krishnendu Baksi, Programme Coordinator, ISCS, India.



Prof. Dipankar Sengupta



Dr. Sreerupa Roy

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



Webinar on Bengali New Year Bengali Nabobarsher Smriti o Annesan 14th April, 2021

On the occasion of Poila Baisakh which is Bengali New Year, the Institute with its team members and other associates organized a web-based discussion about the day-its emphasis, evolving ways of its celebration and contemporary ideologies surrounding the occasion.

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies organized a webinar on 14th April, 2021, titled “Bangalir Nababarsher Oitijhya: Smriti o Anweshan”. The speakers from both sides of the border (West Bengal and Bangladesh) participated and discussed on various issues like Halkhata, special food items and songs.



Welcoming the speakers, Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies discussed the importance and different aspects of observing Bengali Nabo Barsho. Sri Haripado Bhowmik, eminent Researcher and Literurist lucidly discussed on the subject Nabobarsho Na Halkhata. Sri Alam Khorshed, famous writer and Art Collector of Bangladesh discussed the pros and cons of celebration of Bengali Nabobarsho in Bangladesh. Prof. Rajib Chakraborty, eminent linguist highlighted the lucid and interesting aspects of various songs related to the Bengali New Year. Sri Kausik Majumder, Agricultural Scientist and eminent writer discussed the history of the special food items that were served to the guests and relatives to celebrate this day.

The web based academic disquisition ended with a vote of thanks on behalf of the organizers.



Sri Alam Khorshed



Prof. Rajib Chakraborty

International Webinar On **The Descend of Afghanistan and its impact on India** 21st August 2021

In recent months Afghanistan had witnessed the rapid collapse of its military power and the subsequent resignation of the government as Taliban marched towards the national capital of Kabul in their quest of recapturing the power they had lost nearly two decades before when the United States of America led military alliance unleashed a punitive military action against the Taliban for harbouring terrorists and aiding terrorism across the world. Afghanistan holds a significant place in Indian foreign policy. India has deep economic, political and civilizational linkages with Afghanistan. In recent years,

the stride of Indo-Afghan bilateral collaboration in the political, security, development and cultural areas have seen sustained acceleration. Afghanistan is significant for India's security and economic interests. However, the seizure of Kabul by the Talibani forces have raised concerns for New Delhi as it is presuming a loss of diplomatic influence over the region.

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, for long, as a part of its endeavour to analyse the emerging socio-political, economic and cultural issues along India's immediate neighbourhood had organised several meaningful disquisitions on Afghanistan. Thus as a part of that initiative, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies had organised a webinar to discuss the possible impacts of Taliban's retake of Afghanistan titled "The Descend of Afghanistan and its impact on India". Chaired by eminent scholar and international relation expert Professor Ishani Naskar, Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, the webinar included a host of distinguished scholars and eminent persons like Capt. Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation and Adjunct Professor, New Delhi Institute of Management, Mr. Sultan Shahin, Founder-Editor, NewAgelIslam.com, Mr. Shreyas D. Deshmukh, Research Associate, Delhi Policy Group.



Afghanistan is a difficult country to govern, empire after empire, nation after nation had failed to pacify what is today the modern territory of Afghanistan giving the region the nickname of “graveyard of empire”. The moderator of the webinar, in her introductory note, rightfully echoed the above notion and stated how world powers like the British empire, the mighty Soviet or more recently United States of America failed to dominate the territories of Afghanistan. Stating the geo-strategic importance of the country she pointed out how Soviet invasion of Afghanistan gave rise to radical Islam in this region. In her initial disquisition she raised a number of questions like what would be the roadmap of the radical militia as they try to seek legitimacy in the country; she also raised the issue of growing civil resistance in the country against Taliban. She also placed additional issues like the policy failure of United States in regard to Afghanistan, the implication of the Pakistan-China nexus in this present situation, approach of the Islamic countries and Russia and specially India and urged the panellists to analyse them in their disquisition thereafter requesting Captain Alok Bansal to initiate his presentation.

The distinguished speaker commenced his presentation by differing with the moderator about terming Afghanistan as the graveyard of empire which he believed to be a British colonial construct that was successfully propagated by the Americans. While addressing the current political crisis the distinguished speaker highlighted how the widespread electoral corruption of the Afghan presidential election, President Donald Trump’s decision to negotiate with the Taliban and President Biden’s decision to withdraw the U.S. military from the Afghan soil had a disastrous effect over the democratic regime of Afghanistan leading to the overtake of the country’s rule of the Talibani militia.

The distinguished speaker firmly believed that the Pakistani military establishment had advised and guided the Talibani insurgents in their expedition pointing out how the Taliban, unlike the past, through a well-planned manner was able to take control of the key border posts near Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Iran cutting the supports of the rebels who had opposed the Talibans. He also stated that initial dilemma of the Taliban leadership to enter Kabul as evident from its declaration in Doha on 15th August, 2021 and their subsequent capture of Kabul made it abundantly clear that the Pakistani military leadership had advised them to capture Kabul. He also echoed the concern that the change of regime would bring in the end of India’s diplomatic influence over the region. He added that though the Taliban leadership seems speaking of an inclusive government; assuring women to go for work, negotiating with Afghan leadership like Hamid Karzai and Abdullallah Abdullallah, things in reality were different.

In the concluding part of his presentation he stated that regime change in Afghanistan would have a long standing security implication over India as Taliban’s patronage for the global terrorist groups would not only increase recruitment of terrorists from India but under the patronage of Pakistani military and ISI, Taliban foot soldiers would now turn their eyes to Kashmir and India as a whole which they presumed to be part of Kohurestan.

He doubted whether confined in the landlocked area of northern Afghanistan, military confrontation against Taliban under leaders like Amrullah Saleh would sustain, as Taliban leadership had successfully negotiated its relationship with the neighbouring Tajik and the Uzbek governments and recruited substantial

number of Tajik and Uzbek soldiers. This was not only helping the militia to draw local support but also successfully block the logistic support opposition forces received from these neighbouring nations in the past. He concluded his discussion by stating that the problem in Afghanistan had unfolded a serious crisis for India which the leadership would require to negotiate successfully.

He was followed by Mr. Sultan Shahin who believed that the situation was not alarming despite Taliban's capture of power. Describing the Talibani militia as an undisciplined force having a sole aim to loot and plunder, he also pointed out how the Talibani leadership was negotiating with the section of the present leadership of Afghanistan to gain legitimacy in the nation. The speaker in his discussion denied accepting the similarity between ISIS and Taliban as propagated by a section of political commenters.

Subsequently he pointed out how large scale protest against Taliban by ordinary citizens specially women this time is in sharp contrast from 1996 when Taliban was welcomed by citizens as they took control of Kabul.

In the due course of his discussion he regretted the approach of the radical Ulema of India who came in support of Taliban rather than criticising it.

The distinguished speaker also opined that Talibani take-over of Kabul would unleash serious damage to the Pakistani army as terror outfits like TTP might gain power in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan.

The Deobandi movement became the most popular school of Islamic thought among Pashtuns living on both sides of the Durand Line. The Deobandi school of thought had a pronounced influence over the Talibani thought process which the distinguished panellist discussed vividly in the concluding part of his deliberation.

The last speaker of the webinar Mr. Shreyas D. Deshmukh started his discussion by presenting a brief chronology of events that took place a few days before the Taliban took over the political control of Afghanistan. The distinguished speaker stated that though Pakistan had been a victim of home grown terrorism yet its influence on the Taliban and assisting them in their mission to successfully overtake the country could not be denied. He added that the leading world powers like China, United Kingdom and Germany maintaining close contact with the Pakistani leadership after the recent Afghan crisis showed the credible influence they had over the Talibani leadership. In his precise deliberation, he discussed the impact of the Afghan crisis on Pakistan and its close associate China. The speaker stated that the present crisis had created a situation where Pakistan remained the primary contact between various nations in the world and Taliban. He added that this crisis created a political sphere where the nations in a desperate need to evacuate its diplomats and citizens had to rely solely on Pakistan. He opined that the Pakistani leadership due to their cordial relationship with the Talibans might ask their help to exert pressure to curb the PTM movement in the Kyber-Pakhtunkhwa region and also try to stabilise the long standing Durand Line dispute. The regime change had also triggered a major refugee crisis; the speaker presumed that Pakistan would use the Afghan refugee crisis as a

diplomatic tool to gather economic and political support from the international community.

The distinguished scholar also discussed how the present crisis would impact Chinese interest in this region by assessing its impact on the Belt and Road initiative. He also addressed the possibility of China filling up the vacuum as the U.S. footprint got substantially reduced in the region. He also threw light on how China's close proximity with Pakistan and the Taliban would affect the East Turkmenistan secessionist movement in China.

He opined that though the regional countries bordering Afghanistan were in favour of a politically stable Afghan nation and had, to a limited extent, negotiated with the Talibani leadership, yet there was high possibilities that the regional countries would not support Taliban's radical notion of establishing an Islamic emirate.

Subsequently, in the disquisition he commented that the effort of Taliban to engage the existing bureaucracy and a section of the national leadership together to form a government exhibit its incapability to govern a nation. He ended his deliberation with a concern that the Talibani takeover of Afghanistan would in the long run transform the country into a pivot of terrorism jeopardising the security and peace of the entire world. Soon after the deliberation came to an end, the moderator opened the session for the audience to raise their questions and comments from the panellists. A series of questions were raised like the emerging implication of the refugee crisis due to this regime change, the situation of the women and their right under this radical regime and the geo-strategic implication of the regime change over India. The questions were adequately answered by the distinguished scholars. The programme ended with the vote of thanks from Kankana Roy on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, where she thanked the moderator and the speakers for their deliberations and the audience for their comments and questions on this issue.



Mr. Shreyas D. Deshmukh



Prof. Ishani Naskar



Captain (IN) Alok Bansal



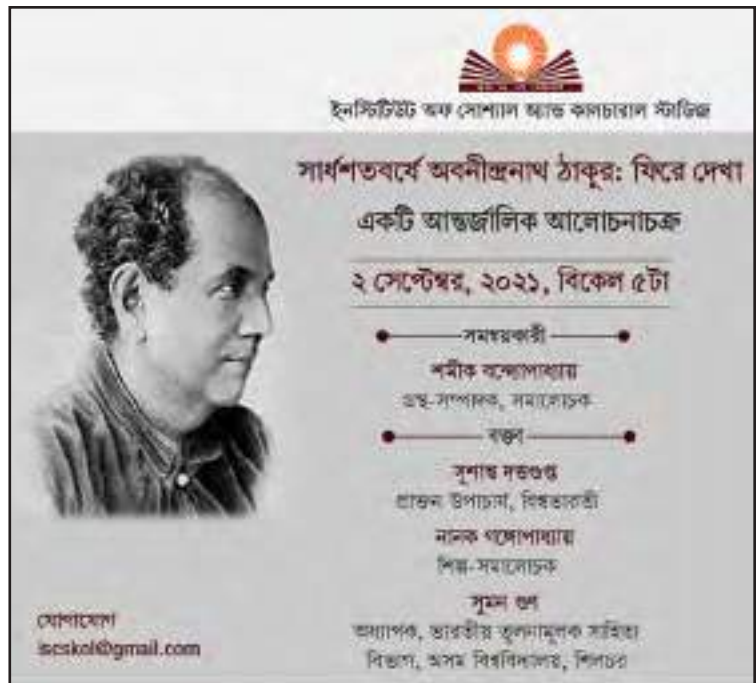
Mr. Sultan Shahin

The Webinar on Sardhasatabarse Abanindranath Thakur: Phire Dekha 2nd September, 2021

Abanindranath Tagore was one of the prominent figures of the nineteenth century Indian Renaissance. It would not be deserving enough to describe him just as an eminent artist for whom Rabindranath Tagore once said that “he saved the nation from self-condemnation”. On 2nd September, 2021, commemorating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Abanindranath Tagore, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies organized a web based academic disquisition titled “Sardha-satabarse Abanindranath Thakur: Phire Dekha”. Moderated by Samik Bandopadhyay this academic symposium consisted speakers like Prof. Susanta Duttagupta, former, Vice-chancellor, Viswa Bharati University, eminent art critic, Sri Nanak Gangopadhyay and Dr. Suman Gun, Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, Assam University - each of whom deliberated on the life and activities of Abanindranath Tagore.

At the initiation of the disquisition Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies tried to depict the exceptional personality of Abanindranath by analyzing his various letters and memoirs. The moderator of the webinar Samik Bandopadhyay by highlighting the multi-faceted endeavours of Abanindranath and chalked the path for the overall academic disquisition.

Abanindranath was encouraged by Jnanadanandini Debi, wife of Satyendranath Tagore to pursue education in art. Eminent Italian artist O. Ghilardi, the then Vice-Principal of Indian Art School taught young Abanindranath landscapes, portraits and use of pastels and oil paintings. Later on he learnt the art of painting from another European painter named Palmer. However, desperate to infuse his own distinct touch in the world of painting he decided to stop learning art and subsequently opened an art studio in his own house. While pursuing his endeavour he received cooperation from his Rabi Ka (Rabindranath Tagore) who at that time was composing the famous musical drama Chitrangada. He gave his nephew, Abanindranath the responsibility of the pictorial illustration



Annual Report (2021-2022)

of Chitrangada. In his memoirs Abanindranath mentioned that later on in his life he laughed at those sketches which failed to explore his desire of creating a distinct and independent way of painting. However Abanindranath never stopped painting. He sketched the portraits of Baishnab Padabali or Betal Panchabingsati and gradually gave Indian art its distinctive identity. This endeavour of Abanindranath Tagore to create a distinct identity for Indian Art came up in the presentation of Nanak Gangopadhyay. The distinguished speaker also highlighted why Abanindranath's exploration of Indian art was extremely modern in nature. Professor Susanta Duttgupta in his deliberation focused on Abanindranath's relation with the Thakur Bari (Tagore Family) and Viswa Bharati. Professor Suman Gun in his presentation mentioned how Abanindranath Tagore through his pen and words sketched wonderful story pictures. He also mentioned how Rabindranath Tagore encouraged and transformed his nephew from a wonderful storyteller to a prolific story writer that, in effect, led to the publication of books like Sakuntala, Nalaka and Rajkahini. The distinguished speaker also added how the speeches delivered by Abanindranath Tagore in University of Calcutta under the encouragement of Asutosh Mookherjee were later compiled into a book titled 'Bageswari Silpa-Prabandhabali'. Beside this the speaker also cited the verbal memoirs of Abanindranath that was penned down by Rani Chandra in her books 'Jorasankor Dhare', 'Gharoya'.

Thus the one and a half hour academic disquisition once more brought alive Abanindranath Tagore in a new light.



Speaker : Susanta Duttagupta



Speaker : Nanak Gangopadhyay.



International Web-Based Symposium on **BIMSTEC: A Vehicle for Growth and Development** (In Collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs, GOI) 25-26 October, 2021

After years of sluggish pace of growth, the Bay of Bengal Initiative of Regional Cooperation BIMSTEC has emerged as an important vehicle of sub-regional cooperation in South Asia and South East Asia in recent times when the Bay of Bengal region is witnessing a rapid change in its geo-political dynamics.

Perceiving the growing importance of BIMSTEC in this region, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India, which for long had carried out academic research, deliberation on various socio-economic, political, diplomatic strategic issues related to Indian Ocean Rim Region, organised a two day long international web based symposium in Collaboration of The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on “BIMSTEC: A Vehicle for Growth and Development” from 25-26 October, 2021. The event received support and partnership by eminent Think Tanks and academic forums from BIMSTEC nations like –The Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, BISS, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), East Asia Study Centre, Dhaka, Indian Studies Centre of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal.



The inaugural session of this International web based symposium commenced with the introductory note of Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, India, followed by the welcome remarks of Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, (New Delhi). The subsequent special address was delivered by H.E. Amb. Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General, BIMSTEC. The session ended with the Inaugural address of H.E. Amb. Harsh Vardhan Shringla. The speakers of this session in their respective deliberations highlighted the history, evolution, significance and prospects of BIMSTEC as a platform of regional cooperation.

BIMSTEC region was adversely affected by the ongoing global pandemic. The symposium initiated its academic deliberation by addressing the impact of Covid 19 and the possible mechanism to recover from

this crisis in its first technical session titled “Post COVID Economic Recovery and Restoring Growth Momentum in BIMSTEC” that was chaired by Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal and had distinguished speakers like Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, Former Ambassador of India to Myanmar, Professor Surat Horachaikul, Founding Director of India Studies Centre of Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, Centre For Policy Dialogue(CPD), Bangladesh.

The deliberations of the speakers were followed by a meaningful analysis by the discussant Ms. Shrabana Barua, ICSSR Doctoral Fellow, Center for International Politics Organization and Disarmament, JNU, New Delhi where she highlighted and integrated the views presented by the esteemed speakers of the session.

BIMSTEC is not only an epicenter of global trade; its member countries have achieved sustained economic growth with a combined GDP of 2.7 trillion dollars. The economic progress of this region has driven the member states for a more robust economic cooperation. Perceiving the significance of trade, connectivity and economic cooperation this web based symposium addressed the issue in its subsequent session titled “Strengthening Regional Value Chains—Role of Connectivity and Trade Facilitation” which was chaired by Prof. Mustafizur Rehman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka and had the presence of eminent speakers like Dr. S.K. Mohanty, Professor, RIS, New Delhi, Dr. Mahfuz Kabir, Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (BISS), Dr. Paras Kharel, Research Director, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal, Mr. Thiam Hee Ng, Director, South Asia Regional Cooperation Division, ADB, Manila.

The discussant, Ms. Dikshya Singh, Programme Coordinator, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal analysed and synthesised the opinions delivered by the speakers during their respective presentation.

The catastrophic effect of the global pandemic compelled the policy makers of the BIMSTEC nations to acknowledge the significance of regional cooperation during health emergencies. On day two this



Mr. Thiam Hee Ng, Director, ADB, Manila

web based disquisition addressed the above issue in its inaugural session titled “Regional Cooperation in Public Health Infrastructure and Health Care Services” which was chaired by Dr. Mannava MarutiVaraPrasada Sarma, Professor and HOD, Department of Community Medicine, Kamineni Medical College and had the presence

of eminent panellists like Dr. Pandup Tshering, Health Secretary, Bhutan, Prof. Shiva Raj Adhikari, Head of the Department, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Dr. Sanjay Rai,



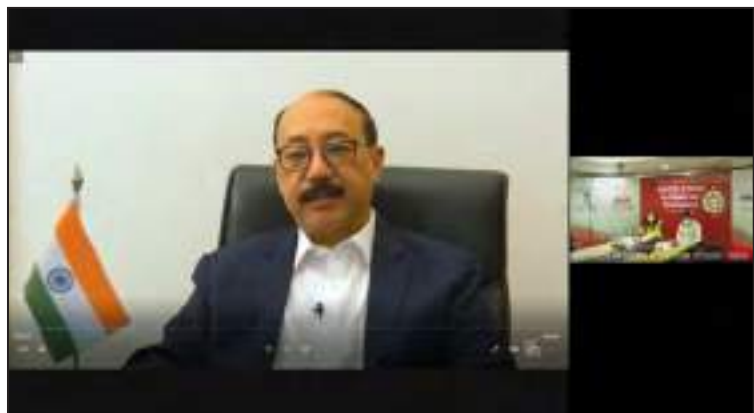
H.E. Amb. Tenzin Lekphell
Secretary General, BIMSTEC

Prof of Community Medicines, AIIMS and National President, IPHA.

The session ended with the analysis of the discussant, Dr. Monika Langeh, Emergency Physician BLK-MAX Hospital, New Delhi, NMO General Secretary, New Delhi who summarized the deliberations of the session through her analytical commentaries.

Cyber Security as a non-traditional security threat has emerged as a growing concern for this region. The subsequent session of the symposium analysed this issue through a special address under the title “Cyber Security amongst BIMSTEC nations: Challenges and Prognosis” which was chaired by Dr. Uttam Sinha, Head, NonTraditional Security Centre, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and had an eminent speaker Lt. Gen. Rajesh Panth, National Cyber Security Coordinator, India.

The Bay of Bengal is not only highly prone to extreme weather events which result in massive disaster; it is also vulnerable to a number of security threats like human trafficking, narcotics, exploitation of natural resources, piracy, sea-based terrorism leading the member nations of BIMSTEC to cooperate with each other in the field of disaster management and maritime security. The deliberation on the above subjects came up in the successive session of this web based seminar under the title “Disaster Management, Maritime Cooperation and Coastal Security” which was chaired by Dr. Asannga Abeyagoonasekera, Academic, Geopolitics and foreign policy analyst, Sri Lanka and had expert panellists for deliberation which included Prof. Delwar Hossain, Professor of International Relations, and Founder



H.E. Amb. Harsh Vardhan Shringla
Foreign Secretary, MEA, India

Annual Report (2021-2022)

Director of East Asia Centre, University of Dhaka, Dr. Smruti Pattanaik, Research Fellow MP-IDSA, India, Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha (Retd), Former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff & Commander-in-Chief, Western Naval Command.

The presentations of the speakers were followed by the discussion of the discussant Moutusi Islam, Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (BISS) where she carefully summarized and evaluated the presentations of the panellists.

The valedictory session was addressed by Amb. Dr. Anupam Ray, Joint Secretary, PP&R Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India, who delivered his special remarks on BIMSTEC: A Vehicle for Growth and development. It was followed by the presentation of the distinguished speaker of the session Prof. Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University. Thereafter, a presentation of the symposium report was tabled by Dr. Priyadarshi Dash, Associate Professor, RIS, and New Delhi.

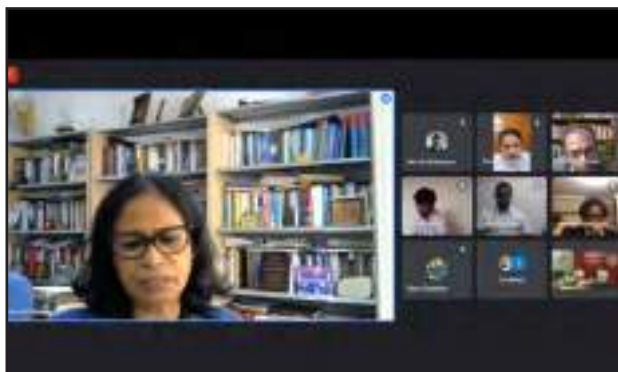
The symposium ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Krishnendu Bakshi, on behalf of Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India.



Prof. Delwar Hossain



Vice Admiral (Retd.) Shekhar Sinha



Dr. Smruti Pattanaik



Webinar on Jal Vayu Parivartan : Nanan Matra (Climate Change: Features and Impact) 9th December 2021

The Bangla Cell of ISCS India that brought some revisions in its structural layout in recent times and in parallel to history and nationalistic perspectives decided to also bring contemporary issues, socio-economic trends and evolving sustainability idioms into notice through arranging frequent discourses and discussions in Bangla altogether. The Initiative will not only help to appraise about policies and pragmatics in regional language, but at the same time will help the organization to connect with region's own people contributing in multiple sectors within the country and across the continents.

The Institute ensue to its objectives with the Webinar on “Jal Vayu Parivartan: Nanan Matra” to discuss about the climatic rejig's or conversions in support of eminent national and international speakers and in virtual presence of trans-disciplinary participants. The discourse started with the remarks of the Distinguished Chair of the discourse – Prof. Jayanta Bandyopadhyay – Researcher, author and Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata, who helped participants to clear up about the concept of Climate Change, global warming and how the thickening of the terrace of gases in our environ are the root cause of climatic uncertainties.

Taking the discussion further Dr. Aditya Ghosh – Associate Professor & Associate Dean (Research), Jindal

School of Art and Architecture (JSAA), also an associate of the University of Heidelberg Germany, described that climate change is directly proportional to socio-economic framework. He also said that the concept has a positive and negative impact, negative as mostly believed that changing patterns in rains, heat and humidity causes agricultural diversities but the climate change has also brought up a ray of hope in Siberian terrain as the increase of heat and thinning of snow layers has raised a chance



of cultivation and agriculture within the region. Secondly the climate change has induced a need to build climate monitoring system/units which is also bringing up privatization and a new occupation. But yes the sufferers of climate change are the ones who are working in fields, cultivating crops. Thus in the era of connectivity and development one should focus on striking a balance – through research, energy alternatives, green infrastructural revolutions so that we move ahead in connectivity, trade, travel but within an apse of a safe and threatless environment. Amitabha Gupta– Assistant Editor of Ananda Bazar Patrika, mentioned that carbon emission advocacy should be the priority of the policy makers at the moment. Along with gentle nudge, awareness and certain steps that should be adopted by the administrative departments to curtail the emission of carbon, he set some examples like climate emission tax, prohibiting high parking costs and incentives/bonus on the much use of public transport should be programmed by the government, to streamline the idea of carbon free environment on a wider note. He also said that the Glasgow policy approach of 2021 should now become a matter of adoption and a system of nudge on worldwide basis that stresses to reduce burden on exhaustible resources on a seminal basis. The final Speaker of the discussion, Prof. Amit Hazra – Palli Samgathan Vibhaga, from Viswa-Bharati deliberated about a model that was choreographed and set up during the development of Shantiniketan by Rabindra Nath Tagore, which back in 1922 itself had set up Climate Information Stations, like Rathindra Krishi Kendra that roll out bulletin and news twice a week predicting rains, storms and various climatic features for the benefits farmers and agriculturists. The Speakers also stressed that the Tagore's ideas of using local ponds and water bodies to generate bio-gas for electricity and cooking gas should be adopted as a model across the world to safeguard environment for the future generation.

Irrespective of limitations to compress such vast and important topic on Climate Change within a short span of time – the initiative of the institute and enriching deliberations followed by discussion session yielded some important measures to stall the aggressive climate change that includes revision of market economy policy, restrictions and a climate change movement, which could be the drives behind toxic less sustainable environment in years to arrive.



Prof. Jayanta Bandyopadhyay

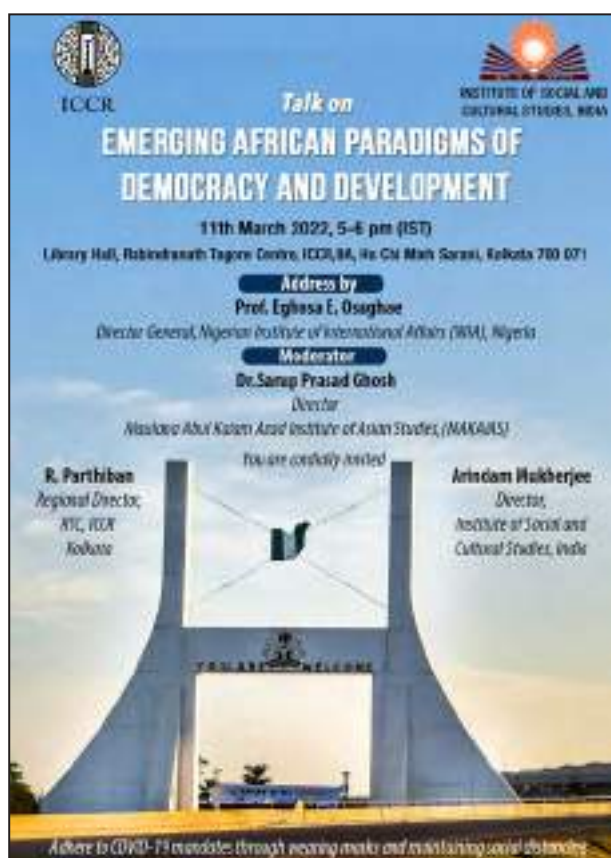


Shri Amitabha Gupta

Talk on **Emerging African Paradigms of Democracy and Development** (In Collaboration with ICCR) 11th March, 2022

The evening of the 11th of March, 2022 turned out to be interesting for the audience assembled at the Library Hall of the RTC-ICCR, Kolkata. As the organized event i.e. a Talk on “Emerging African Paradigms of Democracy and Development” turned an assemblage of multiple academic and cultural forums. As the main host ICCR, India is recognized as a breeding ground of Indian cultural legacies at a global platform. The event also had a representation of MAKAIAS Kolkata which is known for deliberating happenings of Asia from multiple dimensions. As the Director Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh himself extended his support as a moderator of the event. Also the co-host of the event – The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) is engaged in an in-depth research, publications, events on multifarious issues. Congregated with several others to address the policy and implementation tactics behind Emerging Africa and their navigating pragmatics against the challenges of sustainability, radicalization, governance

and identity from the master himself as the event was delighted to have Prof. Eghosa E. Osaghae, Director General, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Nigeria and his wife Dr. Veronika Osaghae.



The event marked its beginning with the welcome note of Sri R. Parthiban, Regional Director, RTC (ICCR), Kolkata. Followed to which the moderator Dr. Ghosh exchanged pleasantries and thanked the organizers for offering him an opportunity to denote the present trends of African democracy and market economy over the deliberation by Prof. Osaghae. The Distinguished Speaker Prof. Osaghae mentioned that Africa as a region had to witness different contestations whose approaches, probabilities and outcomes varied from each other invariably, like COVID-19 and its outcomes had been to the world.

Prof. Osaghae added that the axiom of universality did not actually fit for a region like

Africa. Moreover, the issues like democracy and development remained contested in the region. In order to grow and develop Africa had to identify paradigms where they could confront challenges, define explanatory powers and reconstruct, refigure and reconfigure mechanisms to secure identity and find its place in the run for the world power. Today Africa, like others, is also been scuttled with arm conflicts, gender disparity, terrorism, internal displacement of people, insecurity, radicalism etc. In order to confront such issues Africa is gearing up towards the process of self strengthening attributes and institutionalization. As by now the people have understood that Africa is not a lab, and not a region of experiments and thus a permanent solution, institutional mechanisms are to be folded to counter irrationalities.

Among the benefits Africa, unlike others, too have lot of natural resources and power of youths. But lack of skills, power of institutionalization tend to handicap the youth power in the race of growth and development. As Africa, irrespective of natural resource, does not have a capacity or skills to rightly use and invest resources. Therefore, the region continues to remain dominated by foreign powers who provides funds and treats us as their subservient – raises the factor of recolonization. Moreover, big powers that include US, UK, France, Turkey along with others also tend to split Africa. As the region is been cut across by Indian Ocean, the power of Blue Economy continues to provoke foreign power in various ways and rises concerns towards the factors like economy, geopolitics, coastal diplomacy. Thus, Prof. Osaghae's deliberation hinted that even in the midst of emerging role of democracy and sustained economic upliftments, Africa is still gyrated with challenges and hence through development of institutionalizations, reviewed governance matrix to reach goals of MDG's and SDG's. Africa is also trying to cast the imperative of self reliance and amending steps to resolute social, political, economic canvas. Followed to which Prof. Ghosh, while summing up the session mentioned historical similarities, cultural linkages, parallel government orientations between India and Africa, and also specified how the concept of self reliance is also profoundly been trended in India through "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan". The event marked its closure with a Vote of Thanks by Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director ISCS and Governing Body Member of ICCR, India, who, based on Indo-African commonalities, underlined the scope of Indo-African partnership of future.



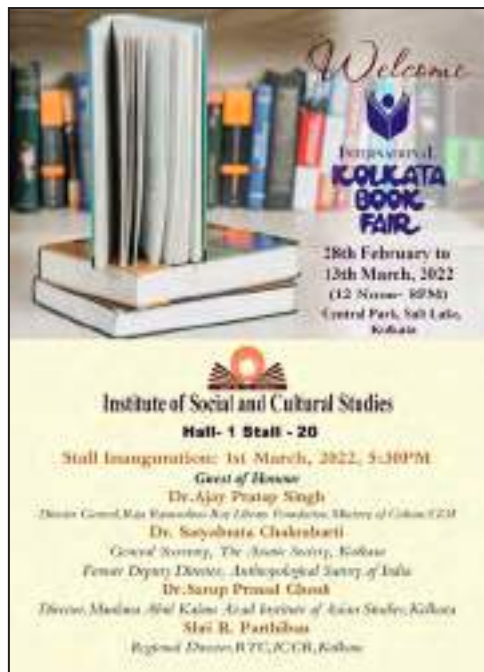
*From (L to R) : Sri R. Parthiban; Prof. Osaghae;
Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh; Sri Arindam Mukherjee*

Annual Report (2021-2022)

BOOK FAIR



The 45th International Kolkata Book Fair



The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India, as an autonomous organization has been addressing history, contemporary and developmental perspectives through discussions, national and International events and also through wide range of publications. In order to share the ideas and narratives of multi-sectoral stakeholders with Institute's global readers and followers. Institute has also been a regular participant at the Kolkata International Book Fair. With passing years and multi-dimensional range of publications, the organization has been able to facilitate a greater exchange of ideas and disseminate connection between local, regional, national and global histories, evolving social trends and future unfolding the world around us. Thus, after two years of being a hostage of pandemic, we are making an attempt to reset to normalcy. The 45th International Kolkata Book Fair organized between 28th of February–13th March, 2022, has enabled the Institute to showcase some of its exciting range of Bi-Lingual publications and engage in one of the largest pavilions

of creators-publishers-acquires altogether. The ISCS Book Stall was inaugurated on 1st of March, 2022 in the presence of eminent guests like Dr. Satyabrata Chakrabarti, General Secretary, Asiatic Society, former Deputy Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghose, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata, Sri R. Parthiban, Regional Director, RTC-ICC Kolkata, Sri Ajay Pratap Singh, Director General, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkata.



*From (L to R) : Sri R. Parthiban; Sri Arindam Mukherjee;
Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh; Sri Ajay Pratap Singh*

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME



Annual Report (2021-2022)

As a part of its academic endeavours ISCS had planned to organize a 3 month internship programme beginning from 1st July, 2021. The interns were shortlisted through a questionnaire and finally 43 interns

had been shortlisted amongst the applicants. While the majority of the interns were from Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata, others were from different cities of Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan.

As a part of their first task, the interns were given a list of topics and were asked to submit a write-up on any topic as per their choice which would be published in the Institute's publication. All of them had submitted their respective write-ups and 6 out of them were posted in the Bi-Monthly Newsreel of the Institute.

On 31st July 2021, the Institute had planned to organize an academic writing session specially for the interns wherein Dr. Suchandra Ghosh, Professor in the Dept. of History, University of Hyderabad had taught the students the art of academic writing and gave them key pointers to remember while writing research papers and other reports. The students liked the session a lot and there were a lot of positive responses about the session from the students.



As independence day was approaching, ISCS held yet another event in the form of a discussion session on 14th of August, 2021. The students had enjoyed the event and the points shared by the speaker.

Apart from the above mentioned events the interns had also attended the regular events that were hosted by the Institute during the 3 month period, such as Indian Ocean Challenges and Security, Indo-Thai conflux and the descend of Afganistan and its impact on India.

Finally, as the 3 month internship had concluded on 30th of September, 2021, ISCS had decided to reward the best performing interns with a gift hamper for their performance along with a certificate and a letter of recommendation. The hampers were given to a teacher of the Modern High School who distributed them among the students. And the teacher and students were eager for the next internship program which was scheduled later in 2022.

Annual Report (2021-2022)

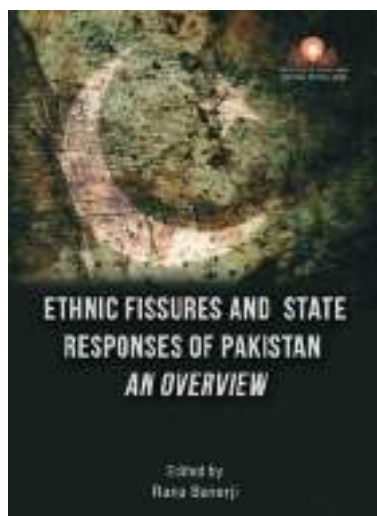
PUBLICATIONS



Ethnic Fissures and State Responses of Pakistan:An Overview

(ISBN: 978-81-954876-3-9)-

Edited by Sri Rana Banerji



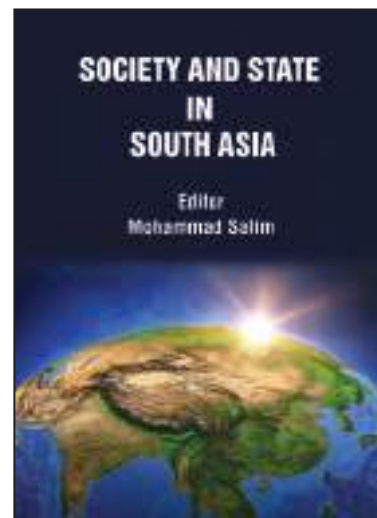
The Book is an initiative of bringing together a host of freedom fighters from different regions of Pakistan to deliberate on Ethnic fissures of the country, was nothing short of path-breaking, as the present monograph shows. In other words, the monograph does a yeoman's service to dig out the ethnic and even Intra-Islamic tension in Pakistan and in occupied territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Society and State in South Asia

(ISBN:978-81-954876-4-6)

Edited by Dr. Mohammad Salim.

The Book is a compilation of research papers and range of essays by eminent journalists and diplomats from India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Canada and Bangladesh. The writers and their narratives intend to explore some new grounds in the historical and contemporary studies of South Asian States and societies. This book also foregrounds how South Asia achieved distinct geopolitical identities through the formation of SAARC.



Rajnoitik Cartoon e Purbo Pakistan: Jugantar Patrika (Depiction of Political Cartoons of Pakistan) (1947-71)

Edited by Snehangshu Bhattacharjee.



The Book is a compilation of political cartoons that were published in Jugantar Patrika of the then East Pakistan, presently Bangladesh highlighting the socio-economic and administrative discriminations faced by the Bengali speaking people of East Pakistan which led them to rebel against the ruling Pakistani leadership and to create a new sovereign Bangladesh. The book, through its in-depth analysis holistically presents the struggle of the East Pakistani people for their self-determination.

Bi-Monthly Bulletin's



News Reel- Since 2019 with institute's Director Sri Arindam Mukherjee as an Editor -in -Chief and Ms. Kankana Roy as an Editor, ISCS's Bi-Monthly "News Reel" is been discerned as an interesting compilation that enables wide multi-sectoral global readers and writers to identify and braid dynamic and contemporary narratives on precincts of culture, power, politics. So far, each of its segment have conjured a discrete flavour and accorded Institute's readers an agility to recognize and learn about stimulating arguments, future indictments, marshalling economy,

defense, environmental sustainability altogether.

Purvodaya: The Rise of Opportunities – Institute's other Bi-Monthly journal "Purvodaya: The Rise of Opportunities" is published as part of institute's Chapter on Purvodaya. The Bi-Monthly, with institute's Director Sri. Arindam Mukherjee as the Editor-in-Chief and Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseth as the Editor was launched by Sri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, in November 2021. The Bulletin, through English/Odia mediums discusses and disseminates the critical and emerging areas of development in the eastern states of India. It focuses on policy related issues on 'Purvodaya ' initiative of Government of India. The Bi-Monthly is financed and supported by The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), GOI, from March 2022 onwards.



PRESS AND MEDIA COVERAGES





Anandabazar Patrika, Kolkata-r Karcha, 11th September, 2021



Times of India, 24th October, 2021



Ei Samay, 9th January, 2021



Ei Samay, 2nd October, 2021



Ei Samay, 13th November, 2021

ଅନୁ. ୧ ଏବଂ ଉଦ୍ଧର

ਅਧਿਕਾਰ-ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾ: ਏਏ ਸੁਫਾਰੇ ਸਾਡੀ: ਕਲਾਕਰਮੀ।



জাতীয় সংসদ
নিয়ন্ত্রণ
উপসভা,
ভারত সরকার

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জাতক/কাল খেলি দে সারকার

Ei Samay, 17th November, 2021

পরিধিষের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক নিয়েও বেশ কিছু করতে সক্ষমতা করে। এই সম্পর্কের নিকটিকে আরও বেশী শক্তিশালী করতে এবং তার বর্তমান অবস্থা একবার পর্যবেক্ষণ করার লক্ষ্যে গতকাল দুি ইনসিটিউট অব সোশ্যাল আর্থ কলকাতার স্টাডিজ-এর উদ্বোধন হয়ে গেল একটি সম্মেলনে। ভারত সরকারের মিনিস্ট্রি অব এক্সট্রানিউর্যাফার্স-এর কলকাতায় কার্যালয়ের সহায়তায় এই ওয়েবিনারের শিরোনাম ছিল 'ইথো-ভিয়েতনাম কনফ্লিকশন'। সহায়তা দেচ্ছে ইকোনমিক ডিপ্লোমাসি আন্ড স্টেটস ডিভিশন-এর পক্ষ থেকে। এ দিন বিকেল দুটো থেকে 'কনফ্লিট ই বিকালেন্ট' শিরোনামের চতুর্থ পর্বের ধারাবাহিকে এই পূর্বের আলোচনায় অংশ নিলেন এ দেশে ভিয়েতনামের বস্তুনিষ্ঠ ফান সান ছাউ এবং গবেষণের দূত প্রবাসী রাম ছিলেন ভিয়েতনাম ডিপ্লোম্যাটিক অক্যাসেমির টন সিন থানহু এবং নিউ মিরি ইনসিটিউট অব সোশ্যালস সায়েন্স অফ কলকাতা পরিচালনা করেন প্রীতি সান্যাল।

Ei Samay, 8th May, 2021

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Ei Samay, 23rd April, 2022

정명 : 이복선 (정명기)

अखिल विश्वभर एनिकेसका कालेज मिटर व्यापकताले उपलब्ध छी।



वि. एम. एल. विद्यालय
आर्य

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জন্মস্থান: ঢাকা-১৯৫১

Ei Samay, 28th April, 2022