

Two-Day International Seminar
on
**Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in
South and South East Asia**



Organised by
**Centre for South East Asian Studies
&
Department of Political Science(UGC-SAP)
Gauhati University, India**

Date: 8-9 March, 2018



About Gauhati University

The establishment of Gauhati University was the culmination of a prolonged movement by the people of Assam for a university of their own since the early years of the twentieth century. In 1917, presiding over the annual session of the Assam Association at Sibsagar, Satyanath Bora strongly advocated the case for a separate university in Assam. The Sadler Commission, while visiting Cotton College in 1917, remarked that Assam could not be expected to mould its national character and shape its courses and curriculum of study so long as it remained under the academic control of Calcutta University. The matter was discussed in the Legislative Council for the first time in April 1917.

A resolution was tabled for a university in the Assam Legislative Council on the 17th of March, 1935, but the Government was not in favour of this because of financial constraints. A widely represented meeting, organized by the Assam Association and the Sangrakshini Sabha, was held at the Curzon Hall, Guwahati on the 30th April, 1935 with Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi on the chair. The meeting called for immediate establishment of a university in Assam and decided to form a University Committee with Lokpriya Bardoloi as the Secretary. With the coordinated efforts of the Assam Association, the Assamese Students' Welfare League and the University Action Committee of Nagaon, a movement was launched all over the state for establishment of a separate university for Assam. "University Day" was observed throughout the state on the 22nd May, 1935 with processions and public meetings.

The initiatives for setting up a university were renewed after the Second World War. In December, 1944 the Gauhati University Trust Board was formed with Lokpriya Bardoloi as its President. Bardoloi, ably assisted by Madhab Chandra Bezbaruah, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Bhubaneswar Barua, Dr. Maheswar Neog and others, toured the entire Assam Valley and secured assurance of more than 16 lakhs of rupees as donation. Of this, more than 5 lakhs were collected within a few months. Meanwhile, Bardoloi took over as the first Prime Minister of Assam in independent India. The formation of a popular Government under the leadership of Bardoloi made the task easier and as the State's Education Minister, Bardoloi moved the Gauhati University Bill. The Bill was accepted in Assam Assembly on the 15th October, 1947. The jurisdiction of Calcutta University and Dacca Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education over Assam and the N.E. Region ceased with effect from the 26th January, 1948. On this date, Prime Minister Bardoloi formally inaugurated the Gauhati University. The eminent scholar and educationist Krishna Kanta Handiqui, M.A. (Cal. et Oxon) joined the university as its first Vice-Chancellor and Phanidhar Dutta, a professor of Mathematics of Cotton College was appointed as its first Registrar.

The university started functioning from a building left behind by the military in the Cotton College campus. In 1948, the University had 18 affiliated colleges besides two professional colleges, the Assam Medical College at Dibrugarh and the Assam Agricultural College at Jorhat till 1955. In the same year, the university was shifted to its present campus at Jalukbari.

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Gauhati University could be established due to the aspirations of the people of Assam and their help and cooperation under the relentless and untiring efforts of a band of dedicated workers led by Gopinath Bardoloi, Madhab Chandra Bezbaruah, Sarat Chandra Goswami, Fakhruddin All Ahmed, Bhubaneswar Baruah and many others.



The unprecedented and spontaneous financial support of the public and their untiring involvement in the thirty-one-year struggle thus led to the establishment of Gauhati University. During the crucial initial years, this institution received the guidance of Krishna Kanta Handiqui, a pioneering Indologist and philanthropist as its first Vice-Chancellor.

A galaxy of eminent scholars and administrators, such as Banikanta Kakati, Birinchi Kumar Baruah, Maheswar Neog, Satyendra Nath Sarma, Paban Chandra Mahanta, Hiten Barua, Rohini Kumar Barua and many others will always be remembered for their notable contributions to the academic world and to the development of the university in its formative stages.

Over the years and across the decades since its existence, Gauhati University has emerged as a symbol of integration: it has offered opportunities of Higher Study to students from the ethnically and culturally diverse mosaic of communities of the North East.



From the Desk of the Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University



Keeping in view the increasing importance of the South and South East Asian Region in the global arena and India's emergence as one of the key actors within it reiterate the need of deeper engagement in understanding the region and its varied dynamics. Therefore, it is a very significant endeavour by the Centre for South-East Asian Studies and the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University to organise an international seminar on 'Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia' to deliberate and debate on issues which have crucial implications for the region. Due to the historical, civilisational and cultural linkages of the region one cannot remain aloof to the political and economic changes and challenges undergone by the different countries within it.

India's role in the region occupies a strategic significance not only in terms of the political and economic changes and challenges emanating from different countries, but also through the diplomatic policies initiated by it. In this context, the strategic location of India's North-East becomes a site through which larger issues of global significance can be addressed. The Look East turned Act East Policy bears a larger importance for the future political and economic life of the North East. This international seminar will appropriately and critically engage in various pertaining issues concerning the region. I wish them very best for this significant endeavour.

Dr. Mridul Hazarika, M.Sc., Ph.D.



**From the Desk of the Director i/c,
Centre for South East Asian Studies**



As the Head of the Department of Political Science and Director for Centre for South East Asian Studies (CSEAS), I welcome all the esteemed invited guests and distinguished paper presenters to the International Seminar on 'Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia'.

South and South East Asia, the region marked by historical, civilisational and cultural similarities and continuities are also distinguished by stark differences and discontinuities. All three dominant religions- Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism accompanied by respective cultural traditions have travelled throughout the region. The seminar tries to address the issues of Consolidation Vs. Decline of Institutions of Democracy, Ethnic Demands, State Responses and Democratic Accommodation- Varying experiences, Global vision of China's Reforms: implications for South & South East Asia, India's Act East Policy: Connecting South East Asia through North East India etc.

The Centre for South East Asian Studies (CSEAS) was established primarily to connect with the civil society and educational institutions of the countries in the region of South and South East Asia. Apart from academic research main purpose of the centre is to establish a people to people connection with the region.

I sincerely believe that the seminar will go a long way towards understanding the South and South East Asia better from the perspective of Northeast India.

Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta



Department of Political Science, Gauhati University

The Department of Political Science of Gauhati University, which was established in the Year 1958, is one of the oldest departments in the University and a pioneer in North East India. In the year 2007, the department completed 50 years of its glorious presence with significant contribution towards teaching and research in the discipline of Political Science. At present, the department is actively engaged not merely in organizing formal courses of learning in the subject but also in promoting and pursuing study and research on the multifarious ethnic groups, their social and political structures, authority system and to find out to what extent the best in the indigenous traditions could be harmonized with the modern-day institutions of governance. The department runs its academic course in semester mode and follows the grading system and has introduced the CBCS (Choice Based Credit System) from the academic year 2016-2017. In its continuous effort to achieve higher echelons of academic performance, the department had achieved recognition from the University Grants Commission under the Special Assistance Programme (SAP) at the level of DRS-I . After successful completion of the first phase of the programme for a period of five years from 1-4-2009 to 31-3-2014, the Department is currently availing the second phase of the programme under UGC-DRS-II for the period 1-4-2015 to 31-3-2020.

The history of the department can be highlighted in terms of its various academic activities, innovative programmes and public interface. From its humble beginnings as a group of elective subjects taught in the Department of Economics in the fifties of the last century, Political Science emerged as a full-fledged academic department of postgraduate teaching and research in this university in 1958. Under the dedicated leadership of Dr. V.V. Rao, the Department grew in strength and vitality. It is in recognition of his scholarship, dedication and service to the society, Government of India honoured Dr. Rao with the Padmashree in 1970. When Dr. Rao relinquished his office on superannuation in 1973, the mantle of headship passed on to Prof. D.P. Barooah which lasted till his elevation to the exalted position of Vice Chancellor of this University in 1986. Subsequently however quite a few teachers have joined the department beginning with Dr. Phani Gogoi and Dr. D.B. Sharma in 1971, Dr Anuradha Dutta in 1969,



Dr. Niru Hazarika in 1972, Dr. Usharanee Choudhury and Dr. Manoranjan Bezbarua in 1976, Dr. Monirul Hussain in 1978, Dr. Sandhya Goswami in 1990, Dr. Alaka Sarmah in 1991, Dr. Nani Gopal Mahanta in 1995, Dr Akhil Ranjan Dutta and Dr Dhruba Pratim Sharma in 2001, Dr. Shubhrajit Konwer in 2004, Dr Jayanta Krishna Sarmah in 2008, Dr. Joanna Mahjebeen and Ms Barasa Deka in 2009 and Mr Vikas Tripathi in 2014. Ms Olindita Gogoi joined the department for a brief period under U.G.C. Innovative Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies in 2007. At present the Department is functioning under the headship of Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta.

The Department plans to elevate its status to a leading centre in the field of teaching and research and reaching out to the community. The principal objectives of the plan are:

To build up networking with the departments of Political Science of the universities in Northeast India and beyond for inter-university exchange to augment teaching and research in the discipline.

To reach out to the departments of Political Science of affiliated colleges for taking up joint ventures in areas like designing of syllabus, organization of national and international seminars, workshops on research methodology, and training of teachers on recent trends and techniques of Political Science.

To set up a Policy Research Unit to address different issues concerning planning and decision making in diverse areas of public concern relevant to Northeast region.

To set up cell for the study of Electoral Politics and Behaviour Analysis in the North Eastern Region of India and building up of networking at the national and international level.

To introduce employment oriented and professional short term courses for Master Degree holders in emerging areas like Human Rights, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Gender Studies, Environmental Politics, Green Governance and Poverty Alleviation.

To start extension programme on Human Rights and Duties with special emphasis on the rights of Women and Children.



National/International Seminars organized by the Department

National Seminar on Problems of Cultural Diversity, Policy Response and Consequences sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research, Shillong 10.02.03

National seminar on “National Policy for Rehabilitation and Resettlement and Draft National Policy for Tribals” was held in the Department of Political Science. North-East Social Research Centre and Omeo Kumar. Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati collaborated with the Department to organize the seminar, sponsored by I.C.S.S.R, Delhi. 11.02.05. and 12.02.05

Third International Dialogue on The Role of Political Parties in India with focus on North East India. Sponsored by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) Sweden and Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. 14-15 June 2006.

National Seminar on State on Human Security in North East India, organized by the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University on 17-18 November 2006.

National Seminar on Troubled Diversity: The Political process in North East India, organized by Department of Political Science, Gauhati University in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla.

National Advanced Training on Human Rights organized by the Department in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission, on 10 and 11 December, 2008.

National Seminar on ‘State of Democracy in North-East India’ organized by the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University in collaboration with ICSSR-NERC) on 25-27 February, 2010.

National Seminar on ‘Environment, Citizenship and the State’ organized by the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University in collaboration with ICSSR-NERC on 23-24 March, 2011.

National Seminar on ‘Democracy and Diversity in North East India’ organized by the Department of Political Science held on 9-10 February, 2012.

National Seminar on ‘State, Social Movements and Democracy in Northeast India’ organized by the Department of Political Science in collaboration with ICSSR-NERC; ICSSR New Delhi and IDOL-Gauhati University held on 27, 28 February & 1 March, 2013.

National Seminar on ‘Gender and Democracy In North East India’ organized by the Department of Political Science in collaboration with ICSSR, New Delhi and ICSSR-NERC, Shillong held on March 4-5 March, 2014.

National Seminar on ‘State and Representative Institutions in Northeast India’ organized by the Department of Political Science, 17-18 March, 2016

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Faculty Members of the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University

Professors



Dr. Nani Gopal Mahanta
Head of the Deptt.



Dr. Alaka Sarmah



Dr. Akhil Ranjan Dutta



Dr. Jayanta Krishna Sarmah

Associate Professors



Dr. Dhruba Pratim Sharma



Dr. Subhrajit Konwer



Dr. Rubul Patgiri

Assistant Professors



Dr. Joanna Majebeen



Ms. Barasa Deka



Mr. Vikas Tripathi



Centre for South East Asian Studies: A Brief Profile

The Centre for South-East Asian Studies is the first of its kind in Northeast India. The aims include furthering dialogue and generating a knowledge network to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by India, and Northeast India in particular. The region holds significance especially in the context of India's Act East policy. India's 'Act East' policy, upgraded from the 'Look East' policy in 2014, serves as a platform for deepening and strengthening its relationship with East and Southeast Asian countries. At a time when manufacturing facilities are shifting to lower-cost economies, both India and the economies of the region enjoy an advantage. With 'Make in India' emerging as a key campaign for manufacturing, developing new global value chains in partnership with the countries of East and Southeast Asia would bring benefits to both sides.

While trade and investment must be greatly increased, it is also important for India to develop infrastructure projects for transport connectivity. India also has to strategically focus on human capacity development and small projects with high impact to address poverty alleviation. In this backdrop the setting of the Centre gains in pertinence. Currently functioning in the Department of Political Science of the University, the Centre has received assistance from the Government of Assam, and this has been included in the budget of Assam for the year 2016-17. Seeking to act as a knowledge hub for furthering India's relations with South and Southeast Asia, the Centre has come up with a plan of action for the year 2017-18. The Centre's plan of action includes organizing regular conferences, seminars and symposia on various themes with special reference to India's regional challenges in South and Southeast Asia; publication of peer reviewed books, monographs and journals by research scholars and faculty members, liaison with scholars and students in various universities of the Northeastern region, promotion of inter university research programmes on themes of trans-border challenges and opportunities and the establishment of linkages with civil society organizations and think tanks. The center is mandated by Govt. of Assam in the state budget of 2016-17.



People at the Centre for South East Asian Studies



Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta
Director i/c, Centre for South-East Asian Studies
Gauhati University

Nani Gopal Mahanta is currently Professor and Head of the Department, Political Science and Director, Centre for South-East Asian, Gauhati University, Assam, India. His research interest includes issues of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Human Development and Security, Insurgency, Ethnicity and Identity Politics. He was a Rotary World Peace Fellow in the University of California, Berkeley from 2002-2004. As a World Peace fellow, he travelled to various parts of the world including Europe and South Asia for his internship and empirical work.

Prof. Mahanta actively participates in various issues of the state and nation through popular writing, seminar, debate and discussion in various platforms including TV and News Paper. Dr. Mahanta has also been a visiting fellow to International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Norway, Oslo. He is currently the president of North East India Political Science Association (NEIPSA) for last four years. His book *Confronting the State: ULFA's Quest for Sovereignty* was published by SAGE.



Dr. Rubul Patgiri
Dy. Director i/c, Centre for South-East Asian
Studies

Dr. Rubul Patgiri is currently Associate Professors, Department of Political science and Dy. Director of the Centre For South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University. Dr. Patgiri obtained his Masters and M.Phil degrees from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Ph.D. from Dibrugarh University. Dr. Patgiri is specialised in International Studies, Foreign Policies and Ethno-regional Politics.



People at the Centre for South East Asian Studies



Mr. Monoj Das

Co-ordinator, Centre for South East Asian Studies

Monoj Das is currently Coordinator of the Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University. He has completed his Master of Philosophy from the Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University on “Organised Crime and Terrorism in Pakistan, 1979-2013”. He is pursuing Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the same University on “Crime-Terror Nexus and Small Arms Proliferation in Pakistan and its Security Implications, 1979-2015”. His areas of research interest are Human Rights, Non-traditional Security, Insurgency and Identity Politics; politics of South Asia, India’s Foreign policy.



A performance of Bodo traditional dance by the students of the Department at NEIPSA Conference, 2016



Events organised by the Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University

A DIALOGUE ON 'EUROPEAN UNION AND INDIA'

Date: 9 March 2016, Time: 1.00 p.m.

A Dialogue on 'European Union and India' was held on the 9th of March, 2016 in the premises of the New Academic Building, Gauhati University at 1 p.m. with an 11-member delegation of the European Union who sought an interactive discussion with the students on matters ranging from electoral politics, the upcoming state assembly elections to the challenges facing the EU today. The delegation was led by Anne Marchal, First Councillor, Head of Political Affairs, Delegation of the EU to India. The diplomats forming the delegation were:



Stijn Mols, Mrs. Laure Huberty, Christophe Meyenburg, Dr. Istvan Pokoradi, Mr. Indrek Erikson, Mr. Christian Wagner, Miss. Anna Uggla, Miss. Seija Kinni, Beatriz Lorenzo, Benjamin Weize, Gilles Roduit.

In her speech Anne Marchal, First Councillor, Head of Political Affairs, Delegation of the EU to India, who was also the main speaker of the event, highlighted the importance of state politics and the assembly elections and the duty of a diplomat to understand such dynamics. She started her deliberations with a simulation exercise with her opening question on what is primarily important to the electorate in Assam among the triad of Corruption, Development and Identity. This was followed by other questions in quick succession, the subjects of which ranged from the viability of the contending parties to win in Assam, the role of media in campaigning and the impact of youth and women participation. Since development was the desirable answer for most people, she asked which party could effectively cater to those needs. Marchal also raised questions on the feasibility of a party like AAP in Assam. It was opined by respondents that it is difficult because politics in Assam faces the challenge of transcending identity issues. There exists a symbiotic relationship between identity and development which makes a 'common man' party difficult if not downright implausible.

The interactive session was followed by felicitation of the guests and a presentation on the EU, forwarded by Anne Marchal. She traced a brief history of the EU and the existential threat it faces today in the light of the refugee crisis and the referendum by Britain and the Eurozone crisis which made Greece a household name only some time back. Questions today have emerged on the of EU and Marchal had to say that although the Brexit referendum is awaited with bated breath the EU seeks stability throughout. The EU-India diplomatic relations too have seen a history of more than 50 years. The EU looks forward to deepening ties and Marchal also called for educational exchanges between the two.

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INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH H. E CHO HYUN-AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Date: 29 June 2016

Venue: Seminar Hall, New Academic Building

The Centre for South East Asian Studies in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University had organized an interactive session with the Ambassador of Republic of Korea, H. E. Cho Hyun as the chief guest of the programme. In his speech, the ambassador spoke about how globalization has fostered mutual cooperation and collaboration among nations of the world in various areas starting from politics-strategic to that off economic and cultural ones. He expressed his personal observations on India's various aspects



related to Indian society and stated his own vision of a developed India. He also gave a rough outline on the history of Republic of Korea i.e its departure from Buddhism to new-Confucianism and thus the emergence of a new Korea with complete separation between religion and politics. He proceeded to highlight the phase of imperial control of Japan over Korea that finally ended on 1945 with the defeat of Japan. He also elaborated on the factors that lead to the division of Korea in to North Korea and Republic of Korea and also put some light on the disturbed phase of 1950, when North Korea attacked Republic of Korea. Finally, he focused on the factors that impelled rapid urbanization and thus, the hike of its economy in the post 1960's period.

The major emphasis of the speech was on strengthening economic and trade related ties between the two countries. In this context, the ambassador referred to India's PM Narendra Modi's mega policies such as Make in India, Made in India, Smart Cities, etc. and expressed his hope for new opportunities in such areas that may strengthen the economy of both the nations. He proceeded to emphasiz on special strategic relationship between India and Republic of South Korea on issues of climate change, mutiny security, cyber security, nuclear energy and so on. In his Speech, H. E. Cho Hyun also emphasized on vibrant cultural exchange between two nations and finally concluded his lecture by highlighting institutional and academic cooperation between two nations through various student exchange programme.

1ST K. D. GOSWAMI MEMORIAL LECTURE
21 January 2017
Venue: Phanidhar Dutta Semar Hall, G.U.



The Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Gauhati University and Srimanta Foundation organized the 1st K.D. Goswami Memorial Lecture on 'India's Northeast: Issues Of Comprehensive Security with Reference to Act East Policy' on the 21st of January, 2017. Dignitaries present on the occasion were Shri G. K. Pillai, IAS (Retd.), former Home Secretary to the Government of India, Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Honourable Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University, Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Prof. Udayan Mishra and Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta. Delivering the K.D. Goswami Memorial Lecture, Shri G.K. Pillai talked about the strategic importance of North East for India and its physical isolation from the mainland India. He expressed his views about how North East is being neglected in spite of many visits to nearby countries to enhance ties with them by the presidents and prime ministers of India. There is a great reluctance on the part of Ministry of External affairs to open up North East due to security reasons. He was of the view that India's soft power is more powerful than the hard power, so there can be cultural and educational connectivity between India's North East and its neighbouring countries. Prof. Udayan Mishra presented his brief comments on Mr. Pillai's speech. The event came to an end with the cultural program performed by Srimanta Foundation.



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 'INDIA'S ONE BELT ONE ROAD
CHALLENGE: VIEWS FROM NORTH-EAST INDIA'**

The Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Department of Political Science, Gauhati University organized a two day's International Conference on India's 'One Belt One Road' Challenge: Views from North-East India. The Conference, first of its kind in India's North-East, saw participation and paper presentations from across the country.

The welcome address was delivered by Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Director i/c, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, Gauhati University and Head of the Department of Political Science. Prof. Mahanta highlighted the objectives behind organising this Conference and stated how OBOR is different from colonialism, welfare state model, communism and the process of globalization (in the form of liberalization, privatization and globalization). He said OBOR is a conglomeration of economic and security strategies envisioning an overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road to foster trade and new markets. He ended by posing certain questions on pertinent issues such as- OBOR as a prospective counter narrative to globalization, India's perceived isolation vis-a-vis its abstention from the OBOR meet as well as its position in the South Asian region, Chinese's hegemonic counter to US and India's response in this regard and so on.

Dr. Mridul Hazarika, The Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University in his speech pointed that the OBOR project in general and Silk Road Economic Belt in particular tries to facilitate economic reforms in Asia-Pacific and Eurasian region and he appreciated the initiative of the Centre of South- East Asian Studies, Political Science Department, Gauhati University for organizing the conference on a topic of both regional and global significance.

Shri Ram Madhav, Director, India Foundation inaugurated the session. In his speech, Ram Madhav stressed on national interest of a nation and supported India's stand on China's initiative on One Belt and One Road. On an apprehensive note, he opined that the main objective of the project is to provide employment opportunities to the Chinese people and to develop the economic sector of the country and considered it as a Chinese strategy to breach India's sovereignty. He believes that India will not become an isolated country by not participating in the BRI, as it is already the member of many other significant regional organisations like BRICS, Shanghai Corporation and so on.

Jayadeva Ranade also shared the same view and concern on OBOR and India's stand. According to him, OBOR is a grand Chinese vision for its own national interests. He has given comparison of the competitive advantage of the Chinese products than Indian manufactured goods. China wants India in this initiative for its own profit and it assumes that India might be the spoiler of this whole project. Lastly, he said that territorial claims of China in India's territory like areas of Arunachal Pradesh as well as Ladakh is challenging India's sovereignty. He ended up his speech by encouraging North-East India to export its products internationally as well as develop innovative thinking for the development as well as prosperity of the region.



The Speakers' List and topic of their presentations:

Dr. Rahul Mishra: 'Overcoming the OBOR Challenge: Options Before India.'

Manisha Chaurasiya: 'Exploring Options for the Indian Foreign Policy towards China led One Belt and One Road Initiative.'

Obja Borah Hazarika: 'To Ride, or Not to Ride, the OBOR: Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative on India'.

Amrita Jash: 'The Security Dynamics of China's One Belt One Road Strategy'

Sreeparna Dasgupta: 'OBOR Initiative: Economic and Strategic Implications for China and India'.

Ritika Passi: 'What "mutual benefits"? What "common security"? Debating win-win cooperation and the peace propositions of the BRI'.

Darshana M. Baruah: 'Maritime Connectivity in China's Belt and Road Initiative'

Dr. Rityusha Mani Tiwary: 'China, India and OBOR: Contrasting Rationalities in the region'

Tilak Jha: 'Winning South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for India and China'.

Jigme Yeshe Lama: 'Tibet, The Dalai Lama and Tawang – The "Residual" in India China Relations'.

Siddharth Singh: 'Maritime Silk Route (MSR) and India's Perceptions.'



**A TALK ON
HOMELAND POLITICS AND ETHNICISATION OF SPACE IN NORTH EAST INDIA
22nd Sept, 2017
Conference Hall, New Academic Building,**

The Centre for South and South Asian Studies, Gauhati University organized a “Vartalap” programme with Dr Chandan Kumar Sharma, the Head of the Department of Sociology of Tezpur University on 22nd of September, 2017. In his lecture Dr Sharma provided a brief historicity of the ethnicisation of space by various groups in the Northeast of India, a region which can be seen to be at the continental crossroads being inhabited by many transnational groups some of whom are migratory in nature. Tracing the trajectory of tribalisation and detribalisation processes he said that in the pre-colonial times the division between the hills and the plains was not much important. Marginal groups existed in both the hills and the plains. With the process of Hinduisation or Aryanisation or more appropriately de-tribalisation, it became incumbent upon the state to merge all these groups. The process of detribalization brought in many groups under the banner of the newly emerging Hindu society. The relation between the hills and the plains further changed with the enactment of the Inner line Permit in 1873 and the Outer line Permit in 1875. Fixed identity with fixed space was created. After inclusion in the Indian sub-continent North-East became a periphery region. The task of reorganization of state further created problems of internal tensions as the land is highly multi-cultural. It is clear that the region’s present predicament is rooted in the flawed ethnic policies of the colonial regime persisted with by the post-colonial Indian state. An alternative approach based on an inclusive, incorporative ideology has the possibility of incorporating the ethnic aspirations of the various groups of northeast Professor Sharma towards the end of the lecture reiterated the need for enlightened leadership and regional councils to deal with the complexities of the modern state.



**PUBLIC LECTURE ON
WORLD PEACE, ROLE OF INDIA & FUTURE OF TIBET
BY LOBSANG SANGAY
(SIKYONG), PRESIDENT OF CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION**

The Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University organized a public lecture on 'World Peace: Role of India and future of Tibet' by Dr. Lobsang Sangay (SIKYONG), President of Central Tibetan Administration on the 3rd of Nov, 2017 at B.K.B. Auditorium, Gauhati University. The occasion was graced by the presence of Dr. Mridul Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University, Dr Suresh Nath, Registrar, GU, and Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Director of the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies amongst others.

In his lecture Dr. Sangay briefly touched upon the international dimension of peace, the current situation of Tibet also delving into the possible solution of the issue highlighting the role of India and future of Tibet. He pointed out that the decline of liberalism and internationalism has posed many challenges. In place of liberalism, there is rise of extremism and in all this violence extreme nationalism has emerged as an additional development. According to Sangay, the ideas of liberalism and internationalism should be embraced and promoted to achieve genuine peace.

Speaking about the rise of India and China on the global stage, Dr Sangay outlined the stark contrast between these two rising powers. He described China's ideology as development without democracy while India follows a more rational approach of marrying development and democracy. He recalled the Doklam stalemate and China's 'Belt and Road' initiative as some of the examples that reflect China's growing expansionist designs. He mentioned how the reality of Confucianist China's expansionist design is being reflected all over the world today especially in India and Southeast Asia. Highlighting the case of Tibet as a lesson for the world to learn from, Dr. Sangay urged countries around the world to not be fooled by China's economic largesse.

Dr. Lobsang Sangay further spoke about the historical relations that Tibet and India shared over the centuries and how the bond has strengthened the two countries respectively. He further outlined Tibetan Buddhism as a key outcome of Tibetan resilience. Dr. Sangay said that Tibet is relevant for peace, water, civilization, teaching of Buddha, geo-politically for India. He said that world peace is required and the Tibetans follow the Gandhian notion of ahimsa. Tibetan administration is based on values and presents the Nalanda tradition. He concludes by saying that he hopes for the success of Tibetan movement with help of India.

The lecture was followed by an interactive session where questions were raised on issues of security, the future of Communism, etc. An informal discussion with the Health and Education Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma was also held on the sidelines of the lecture.



LECTURE ON
INSURGENCY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE ROHINGYA ISSUE
BY
RAJEEV BHATTACHARYA
16th November, 2017

The Centre for South East Asian Studies organised a lecture on 'Insurgency and Human Rights: The Rohingya Issue' which was delivered by Mr. Rajeev Bhattacharya. In his lecture, Mr Bhattacharya highlighted the complexities of the crisis and entailed a detailed insight into the matter depicting factual statements and data that are being collected by rigorous field study conducted by none other than the speaker himself along. Rohingyas were people of South Asian origin dwelling in Arakan region in the 8th century which is now known as Rakhine state in modern day Myanmar. In 1945 Britain liberated Burma (Myanmar) from the Japanese with the help of Burmese nationalist and Rohingya fighters. Rohingyas felt betrayed as the Britishers didn't fulfill their promise of autonomy for Arakan. In 1948 tensions increased between the government of newly independent Burma and the Rohingyas, many of whom wanted to join Muslim-majority Pakistan. It is believed that Pakistan today also has great influence over Teknaf.

Mr Bhattacharya speaks of three categories of Rohingyas based on the identity. The first is the 1978 batch many of whom went to Saudi Arabia and is believed to be funding the activities in Myanmar. The second is the 1992-2012 batch composed of those Rohingyas who are willing to give up their identity having migrated to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. The third batch are those involved in the 2016-17 crisis who are still in the process of settling down, India being the safest destination for them.

He also said that human rights violations are tremendous with people across a broad spectrum ranging from the boatmen who transfer the refugees to the distributors of medical aid being involved in these violations. The most critical and complex development is the rise of insurgency related activities and groups such as ARNO, ARSA, RIF, RSO have mounted up their activities particularly being facilitated by the availability of human resource (specially young Rohingya men angry with the Myanmar government) and the huge influx of weapons.

The lecture was also attended by faculty members from other departments and was followed by an interaction with the students and research scholars of the department.



FIRST SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COMMUNITY (SSRC) COLLOQUIUM
18th November, 2017
Conference Hall, New Academic Building
Gauhati University

The first Social Science Research Community (SSRC) Colloquium organised by Brahmaputra Institute of Research and Development (BIRD), Guwahati in collaboration with the Centre for South East Asian Studies, Department of Political Science, Gauhati University was held on 18th of November, 2017 at Gauhati University. The theme of the first colloquium was 'Experiencing and Exploring Social Science Research'. Social scientists from Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Guwahati, IIT Guwahati, Assam University, Cotton University and various other colleges participated in the colloquium. In the inaugural session, Prof. Akhil Ranjan Dutta elaborated on the need for competitive and collaborative research. He said that the SSRC is about collaborating with all the disciplines as all the issues from local to global level are interconnected. SSRC as a community will help in bringing out research on certain areas like judiciary, legislature, medical technology etc. where not much research has been done. Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta spoke about the changing nature of research in all disciplines and the research gap and limitations can be overcome by research communities like SSRC. While talking about the CSEAS he said that the centre's aim is to establish linkages with South East Asian civil society and educational institutions and to develop research in these areas.

The sessions that followed have a primary focus on methodological issues concerning social science research and the identification of new areas of research in the region and beyond. Important presentation on significant issues concerning research and publication experiences were made by Dr. Joydeep Baruah from OKDISCD, Dr. Pahi Saikia from IIT Guwahati, Dr. Jagannath from TISS Guwahati, Dr. Dibyajyoti Dutta from Dibrugarh University, Dr. Niyananda Deka, Atri Baruah from Gauhati University and Dr. Suman Hazarika, Radiologist, Apollo Hospital. Ms. Sabrina Iqbal Sircar from Cotton University, Dr. Sreeparna Bhattacharyya Roy and Dr. Pankajyoti Gogoi from Arya Vidyapeeth College threw important perspectives on identity issues, emerging issues in education and disability studies respectively. Dr. Harsha S. from Assam University, Madhusmita Borthakur from Studio Nilima and Dr. Prasanta Das from Arya Vidyapeeth College provided a brief summing up of the major themes discussed during the day.



ASEAN- INDIA DIALOGUE PARTNERSHIP: 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Venue: BKB Auditorium, Gauhati University
Guwahati, November 23, 2017

The Centre for South East Asian Studies (CSEAS), Gauhati University organized the 25th anniversary of the ASEAN- India dialogue partnership celebration conference today i.e. on 23rd of Nov at the BKB Auditorium of Gauhati University managed by the department of Political Science. It was a well organised event which began with the presentation of Lao dance and music. The event was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University, Dr. Mridul Hazarika. The conference was attended by Dato' Ramesh Kodammal, Chairman of the ASEAN- India Business Council, from Malaysia; HE Savankhone Razmounry, Vice Minister, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR and HE Southam Sakonhninhom, Ambassador of Lao PDR to India; Habib Choudhary, Chairman, AIBC, Lao Chapter. The guest of honour was State Commerce and Industries Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary. The conference was mainly to celebrate the healthy 25 years of relation between India and the South Asian countries and its growing diaspora. The Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University Dr. Mridul Hazarika and Prof. Nanigopal Mahanta , Director of CSEAS, Gauhati University through the event have informed the gathering about their fruitful visit to Lao with the initiative of Habib Chodhary where they signed a MoU with the National University of Lao under which few students of the Lao University will undertake a 3 months course in Gauhati University in the IT and Science and Technology Department. Hon'ble Vice Minister, Savankhone Rajmounry and Ambassador H.E Southam Sakonhninhom addressed the audience by describing about the country of Lao and its progressive educational development and the similarities between the two countries. Hpn'ble State Commerce and Industries Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary enlightened the audience with the agenda of the Assam Govt. which is working actively for the Act East policy. He mention about the MoU signed with the Singapore Government for skill development and also about future agreements to be signed with Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The state is also working hard for the road and air connectivity between Assam and the South East Asian countries, said by Chandra Mohan Patowary. The event concluded with a token of appreciation to Habib Choudhary, Chairman, AIBC, Lao Chapter who played the lead role in organizing the event.



**SPECIAL LECTURE SERIES ON “MYANMAR AND NORTHEAST INDIA”
by
Subir Bhaumik
18th and 19th January, 2018**

The Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, Cotton University organised a special lecture series on “Myanmar and Northeast India” on 18th and 19th January, 2018.

Professor Nani Gopal Mahanta, (Head, Department of Political Science and Director i/c, Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University) in his welcome address outlined the geo-strategic significance and political dynamics of Myanmar and the spillover effects of its political developments on the geographically contiguous North-eastern part of India.

Mr. Bhaumik, while delivering his lecture on “Myanmar: Democracy and Federalism on Trial”, gave a comparative reference to the process of democratisation and deepening of federalism between India and Myanmar. He gave a special description of the democratic movements in Myanmar and the emergence of new young leaders like Aung San Suu Kyi after experiencing decades long military rule controlling the political power. Prior to this movement, the democratic protests and movements were highly unorganised as Myanmar lacked a political party and an iconic leader to fight for democracy. But the protests found a shape in formalising political resistance when Suu Kyi managed to mobilise a clutch of new leaders and formed the National League for Democracy (NLD) that swept the majority of seats in the 1990 elections to the national parliament.

He pointed out that the year 2007 was the next most important watershed in Myanmar’s Struggle for democracy. That year, Buddhist monks, most revered in Myanmar, rose in revolt against the military rule and Myanmar experienced the saffron revolution. The army was totally discredited and alienated from the people after this revolution. During this course of democratic upsurge against military control, the major development was the adoption of a new democratic constitution in 2008 in Myanmar, but also played into the system crucial provisions that gave the army a major role in the new power structure. The constitution gives the army 25% of the seats in both houses of the Parliament, control over three ministries of Home, Defence and Border Affairs (which indirectly gives it control over Myanmar’s neighborhood foreign policy).

In his concluding observations, he has considered that democracy in Myanmar is still fledgling, as the army retains much power and the crisis in Rakhine has helped in regaining some of its lost image. He has argued that the Rakhine crisis has helped create a national security bogey which the army has shrewdly used to project itself as protector of national unity, as in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The NLD is seen as the only national party but its grip on regions like Rakhine are weak. The peace process initiated by Suu Kyi, that she calls Second Panglong, has failed to bring in any major change. He concluded his lecture with a very pessimistic note that unless the Suu Kyi government is able to come up with a federal solution that is acceptable to the ethnic armies, the foundation of the Myanmar’s democracy will remain weak for a long period.



Valedictory Session on
MEGA NATIONAL INTEGRATION CAMP COMMEMORATING INDIA-ASEAN SPECIAL SUMMIT 2018
Venue: B.K.B. Auditorium, Gauhati University
31 January, 2018

The valedictory session of the “Mega National Integration Camp: Commemorating India-ASEAN Special Summit 2018” organised by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan in collaboration with the Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University was held in the Birinchi Kumar Baruah Auditorium of Gauhati University on 31st January, 2018.

The Welcome address of the Valedictory Session was delivered by Prof. Mridul Hazarika, the Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University. He holds the belief that the strength of a country solely lies on the youth, and in making India strong and prosperous, the contribution of the young generation is enormous. He has highlighted the significance of education that holds the potential in the effective implementation of the Act East Policy, as connecting the people of these two regions is a prime focus of this policy along with the economic integration. Education can better connect the people and societies of these two regions as it transcends all the territorial barriers. In his concluding remark, he has promised to provide all the necessities and requirements to the Gauhati University that can be used as a connecting point with the South East Asian Nations.

Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta, Director of the Centre for South East Asian Studies, in his address gave special thanks to the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) for organising this mega integration event and for giving the opportunity to the Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University to conduct the Closing ceremony at the university. Prof. Mahanta had highlighted the civilisational linkages India and more especially the North East India shares with the South East Asian countries. He has emphasized the importance of ‘Track-III Diplomacy’ and ‘People-to-people Contact’ as the major channels of connecting the people and societies that would ultimately result in the integration and bonding of these regions in all the spheres. He considers that the educational exchange between the two regions can boost the ties and integrate the relation which is mandated by the Look East turned Act East Policy of India.

Following this, the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal delivered the special address of the valedictory session. In his opening remarks, he has given a particular call to the audience to strengthen the Indian nation by uniting the people with the help of unity and fraternity. He believes that only youth of the nation possess the ultimate ability to make the Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” a grand success. The future, prosperity and well-being of a nation solely rests on its youth and India is called as the “Youngest Nation in the World”. He has extreme faith on the ability and power the youth of India possesses. The Hon’ble Chief Minister also made a reference to the Skill India Mission, the first mega mission launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi after coming into power, that seeks to provide technical skills to make the youth economically self-sufficient. He had also emphasised that national integration process is always dynamic and there are many things yet to do in uniting and integrating the Indian nation and its people.



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON
'RESURGENCE AND REVERSALS OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA'
8-9 March, 2018

CONCEPT NOTE

The South and South East Asia region presents a unique landscape marked by a paradox of historical, civilizational and cultural similarities while at the same time distinguished by stark political differences and discontinuities. All three dominant religions- Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism accompanied by respective cultural traditions have shown their presence throughout the region. In many countries in South East Asia, all these religions and cultures have evolved into multi-cultural synthesis, but in the region of South Asia evolution of such a cultural synthesis is under severe challenges. While in Singapore, there have been attempts in the recent past to ensure the highest political positions after certain durations for the minority community, in India there have been strong tendencies to consolidate and impose majoritarianism. In terms of political processes, democratic upsurge has been the dominant marker; however, there are aberrations. The experience in Maldives, for example, indicates that democratic consolidation has a long way to go. In the Indian sub-continent, despite many challenges, institutional democratic processes have sustained, which has not however been the case with Pakistan. Here, it is the Judiciary which has emerged as the umpire in deciding the political ups and down to a great extent. Rise of ethnic minorities and corresponding constitutional innovations for accommodating the minority rights have been a significant development throughout the region of South and South East Asia. Innovations of accommodative institutional mechanism have been the experiences in many South East Asian countries, for example Singapore and Indonesia. Countries like Thailand have also evolved mechanisms to accommodate the migrants from across the border by guaranteeing set of rights related to social security.

The adoption of new liberal market policies by the countries in the region has had different fallouts. The Asian tigers, lead economies in South East Asia triggered enormous economic growth, but have been vulnerable to global slowdowns. In terms of human development, most of the countries have done well with higher human development indices. Countries in South Asia had different experiences under neo-liberal reforms. These countries too registered higher economic growth, but with no guarantee of equity and social security. Popular discontents have been rising and the countries across the region have resorted, both to social security measures as well as state repressions to mitigate the discontents. Bhutan's happiness index has drawn global admiration; Nepal's move to turn a Hindu theocratic state into a secular polity has been termed inspiring and progressive.

The functioning of institutions- Parliament, Judiciary, Police, Bureaucracy, Political Parties etc. have also been different from one country to the other. Judiciary has emerged as one of the significant institutions of social and even political arbitration in the region. Indian Judiciary has played a remarkable role in this, to the extent of adjudicating the issue of citizenship. State's coercive apparatuses and actions have come under close scrutiny of the Indian Judiciary .

*International Seminar on
Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia*



In Pakistan, the Judiciary has even played a role of political arbitration, by disqualifying the incumbent Prime Minister on charges of corruption. In Nepal too, Judiciary has been consolidating as a pillar of fulfilling democratic aspirations.

China's emergence as a global economic power and its global vision for an alternative global order has immense bearing on the region of South and South East Asia. The launch of One Belt One Road (OBOR) project by China with numerous infrastructural projects, both road and maritime projects have been perceived differently by different countries in the region. Consolidation of China's grip in the region primarily moves through infrastructural projects. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been an issue of contention in this regard, particularly for India. The North East India, which is a gateway both to South and South East Asia, is therefore vulnerable to the political and developmental upheavals in the region. While insurgency, immigration, illegal border trade and smuggling etc. are the traditional challenges for the region of Northeast India in its open door policy with South and South East Asia; the formal opening up through Look East turned Act East Policy opens up new opportunities of cultural exchanges, people to people contact, formal border trade opportunities, health and educational exchanges apart from solidarity approach in dealing with insurgency, illegal border trades etc.

The present seminar primarily intends to address the following issues:

Themes of the Seminar

1. Consolidation Vs. Decline of Institutions of Democracy
2. Ethnic Demands, State response and democratic accommodation-Varying experiences
3. Terrorism, inter- state conflict and prospect for democracy
4. State border, migration, refugee and crisis of democracy
5. Gendered Democracy: Varying Experiences
6. 25 years of ASEAN India Relationship and China's OBOR: Cooperation and Contestation



Speakers at the Seminar



DR. ABHISHEK PRATAP SINGH
South Asia Democratic Forum (Belgium)

Dr. Abhishek Pratap Singh is a Fellow at South Asia Democratic Forum, Brussels, Belgium. He has done his Ph.D. from East Asian Studies, JNU, New Delhi



DR. AKHIL RANJAN DUTTA
Professor, Gauhati University

Dr. Akhil Ranjan Dutta is presently Professor in the Department of Political Science at Gauhati University, Assam, India. Dr. Dutta is an academic activist and engaged with both academic research and socio-political activities concerning human rights and dignity in the region of Northeast India. Honourary Chairperson of Brahmaputra Institute of Research and Development (BIRD), Guwahati, India Dr. Dutta is also an Executive Editor of ,Natun Padatik, a socio-cultural monthly published from Guwahati. His research areas are Human Security, Ethno-National Politics and Citizenship



DR. AMIT SINGH
ARSD College, University of Delhi

Dr. Amit Singh is working as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, ARSD College, University of Delhi. Dr. Singh is also associated as Honorary Director, The India Institute, Joint Secretary & Conference Coordinator, Organisation of Diaspora Initiatives (ODI), New Delhi, National Advisory Council Member of Centre for Human Security Studies, Hyderabad and Editorial Advisor, The Nationalist, E-Journal of the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation, New Delhi.

He worked with the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi from 2010-2014. He was also a visiting Research Scholar, Yayasan Strategik Sosial, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He also taught Political Science at the Amity University, Gurgaon, Zakir Husain Delhi College and Motilal Nehru College, DU.



Speakers at the Seminar



PROF. BIDYUT MOHANTY

Head (Women's Studies), Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi

Bidyut Mohanty, Ph. D, is the Head, Women's Studies Unit, Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), New Delhi(Honorary). She is a visiting fellow in Orfalea Center, in Department of Global and International Studies, University of Santa Barbara, California (UCSB). From 2007-2011 she taught a course on 'Women, Culture and Development'. She has been engaged in research and training of elected women representatives at the grassroots level for over 20 years.



DR. DHRUBAJYOTI BHATTACHARJEE

Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi

Dr Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee is a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Sapru House, New Delhi. Prior to joining ICWA, Dr Bhattacharjee was an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Siliguri College, University of North Bengal for ten years (2005-2015). Among contributing many chapters in edited books, he has published his book on Pakistan's foreign policy decision making. His interest also includes Terrorism, Human Security, Foreign Policy Decision Making, India and Myanmar, India and Vietnam, India and Israel, South Asian politics, political and strategic development in Pakistan and Afghanistan and ASEAN.



DR. JAGANNATH AMBAGUDIA

Associate Professor, TISS, Guwahati Campus

Jagannath Ambagudia is Associate Professor at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Chairperson, Unit for Research and Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati Campus. Prior to join TISS, he taught at the Department of Political Science, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi; National Law School of India University, Bangalore, Karnataka and ARSD College, University of Delhi. Dr Ambagudia has published extensively on issues of Adivasi society, social exclusion and inclusion, development and deprivation, marginalisation, preferential treatment, distributive justice and community conflict.

*International Seminar on
Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia*



Speakers at the Seminar



DR. JOYDEEP BARUAH
Associate Professor
OKD Institute of Social Change and Development: Guwahati

Joydeep Baruah is currently working as an Associate Professor at OKD Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, and teaches Economics. Major areas of his research interest include issues related to political economy of development. Engaged in a number of research projects concerning North East India, he very recently completed Assam State Human Development Report as Principal Coordinator and Lead Author. Credited with many research publications in journals of repute, his recent publications include the book *Neoliberal State and its Challenges* (co-edited with Bhupen Sarmah) published by Akaar.



DR. MANINDRA NATH THAKUR
Centre for Political Studies, JNU

Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur is an Associate Professor in the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He received his Ph.D. from University of Delhi. He is closely associated with the process of exploring diverse knowledge traditions in South and South East Asia. His areas of research interest are- Marxist Theory; Religion and Politics; New Religious; New Religious Movements; Creative Theory and Indian Politics.



Speakers at the Seminar



PROF. MANORANJAN MOHANTY
University of Delhi (Rtd.) and
Distinguished Faculty, Council for Social Development (CSD)

Professor Manoranjan Mohanty Ph. D. (UC, Berkeley) is a Political Scientist, China Scholar and Human Rights and Peace activist with many publications on social movements, development studies and global transformation. After retiring from University of Delhi as Professor of Political Science, he has been with the Council for Social Development (CSD) as a Distinguished Professor and as Editor, *Social Change* published by Sage. He is also Chairperson, Development Research Institute, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Honorary Fellow and former Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), Delhi and Fellow at Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, UC, Santa Barbara. His latest book, *China's Transformation: the Success Story and the Success Trap*, an in-depth study of the socio-economic and political process of reforms in China since 1979 has been published by Sage in October 2017.



NILOY DUTTA

Nilay Dutta is Advocate General of Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Senior Advocate at Gauhati High Court. He is a member of the three member Mudgal Committee (headed by Justice Mukul Mudgal and comprising former Additional Solicitor General of India L Nageswara Rao as the other member) formed to probe the 2013 Indian Premier League spot-fixing and betting case.



Speakers at the Seminar



AMBASSADOR (PROF.) PHUNCHOK STOB DAN
Senior Fellow, IDSA

Ambassador (Prof.) P. Stobdan is a distinguished academician, diplomat, author and foreign policy expert. Ambassador Stobdan has earlier served in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). He also served as Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies in Jammu & Kashmir. He is the Founding President of the Ladakh International Centre, Leh. Ambassador is currently with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. He is a Distinguished Fellow at the United Services Institution (USI). Ambassador P. Stobdan is a leading columnist for Indian Express and other national dailies in India.



DR. PRAMOD JAISWAL
Faculty, Tribhuban University, Nepal

Dr. Pramod Jaiswal is a Faculty at Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy (MIRD), Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. He is also Senior Fellow at the Pangoal Institution, Beijing and Visiting Research Fellow at Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi. Dr. Jaiswal has previously worked at Fudan University, Shanghai, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, and the Rising Nepal, a Kathmandu-based English daily. He holds a PhD from School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and is the Member of International Advisory Committee, Journal of Liberty and International Affairs, Macedonia and Member of the Editorial Board, Gandhara Journal of Research in Social Science, Pakistan.



Speakers at the Seminar



DR. PRITAM BARUAH
Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School

Dr. Pritam Baruah is Associate Professor of Law at Jindal Global Law School. His research and teaching interests are in Legal Philosophy, Constitutional Law, and Constitutional Theory. His current work involves examining how constitutional courts employ moral values such as dignity, liberty and democracy in decision-making. He also teaches and researches on the theory and practice of democracy with a particular focus on India, China and the European Union. He has conducted research for the Justice MM Poonchi Commission on Centre-State Relations, and the Justice DP Wadhwa Commission on the Public Distribution System. From 2010-13 he was a teaching fellow in jurisprudence while he was a commonwealth doctoral scholar at University College London, and was a founding convener of the UCL Legal Philosophy Forum. Prior to joining academics he was a practising lawyer at the Supreme Court of India and was also a member of the Supreme Court appointed Central Vigilance Commission on the Public Distribution System.



PROMOD SINGH
Ph. D. Scholar at the Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University



Speakers at the Seminar



PROF. S.D. MUNI
Professor Emeritus, JNU and
Distinguished Fellow, Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses

Prof. S.D. Muni is a Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Distinguished Fellow, Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA). He has served as India's Special Envoy to Southeast Asian countries on UN Security Council Reforms (2005-06) and served as India's Ambassador to Lao PDR (1997-1999). In 2005, the Sri Lankan President bestowed on him "Sri Lanka Ratna", the highest civilian honour for a non-national. He superannuated from JNU, New Delhi in 2006 and had held the Appadorai Chair of International Relations and Area Studies. He was the founder editor of Indian Foreign Affairs Journal (Cambridge University Press, India) and South Asia Journal (Sage India). He served Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi as Director of Research (2006-2007). A founder Executive Member of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Colombo, Prof. Muni was nominated to India's first National Security Advisory Board in 1990-91. He addressed the UN Ad-hoc Committee on Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace at Sochi (then as a part of USSR) in 1985. In October 2014, he also received the "Life Time Achievement Award" from Shri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati, A.P, India.



SUBIR BHAUMIK
Eminent Journalist and Author

Subir Bhaumik is BBC's former bureau chief for East & Northeast India and author of three acclaimed books on Northeast India -- "Insurgent Crossfire", "Troubled Periphery", and "Agartala Doctrine". He is now a senior editor of the Dhaka-based bdnews24.com and a consulting editor for Myanmar's Mizzima group. As a senior fellow with the Kolkata-based Centre for Study in International Relations and Development (CSIRD), he is involved in the Track II K2K process involving Indian and Chinese frontier regions.



Speakers at the Seminar



PROF. SWARAN SINGH
Professor, CIPOD, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Dr. Swaran Singh is Professor for Diplomacy and Disarmament at Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi). He is President of Association of ASIA Scholars, General Secretary of Indian Association of Asian & Pacific Studies, Guest Professor at Research Institute of Indian Ocean Economies, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (China) and Advisory Board Member of Atlanta-based Communities Without Borders Inc. (United States). Prof Singh has 25 years of experience in research and teaching and he lectures at major institutions like National Defence College, Defence Services Staff College, and all other major military institutions as also Foreign Service Institute, Indian Institute for Public Administration etc.



DR. SWARGAJYOTI GOHAIN
Assistant Professor, Ashoka University

Dr Swargajyoti Gohain is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Ashoka University. Before joining Ashoka, she held a tenured position at IIT Kanpur. She has also held postdoctoral positions at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Netherlands and Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. She has a PhD in Anthropology from Emory University, USA and Masters and M.Phil. degrees from Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University. Swargajyoti Gohain has conducted ethnographic work on culture, politics and development among the Monpa communities of west Arunachal Pradesh, and has published several articles on these issues. Her research interests include border studies, cultural politics, oral history, mobilities, development, and infrastructure. Her regional interests are South Asia and the Himalaya region.



Speakers at the Seminar



PROFESSOR UDAYON MISRA
(Retd.) Dibrugarh University

Professor Udayon Misra, former Professor and Head of the Department of English of Dibrugarh University, had his school and college education at St Edmund's College, Shillong. He did his Post-graduation in English Literature and his LL.B from Gauhati University. Misra has been writing extensively on the society and politics of India's North-East and his publications include *The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the Nation-State in Assam and Nagaland* (IIAS, Shimla), *North-East India: Quest for Identity*, and *The Transformation of Assamese Identity*. At Present he is member of the governing body of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and is the Visitor's Nominee to the NEHU Court.



DR. UPASANA MAHANTA
Associate Professor,

Dr. Upasana Mahanta is an Associate Professor and Executive Director in the Centre for Women, Law and Social Change, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University. Prior to joining Jindal Global University, she was working as an Assistant Professor in Centre for Women's Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Dr. Mahanta has completed her Ph.D. from Centre for Canadian, US and Latin American Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was also a Shastri Doctoral Fellow in the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Mahanta's research interests include role of women in emergent political institutions; gendered understanding of conflict; women organizing and resisting in insecure contexts; and examining development through a gendered lens.



Abstracts

Reframing the Discourse On Democracy: On Resurgence and Reversals

Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty
University of Delhi

The long history of the global discourse on democracy has entered a new phase in the recent decades. Its contents, forms and articulations, substantive and procedural elements and above all the core values, institutions and practices are more fundamentally shaped today by the experiences of the countries and people of Asia, Africa and Latin America (ASAFLA) than the experiences in Europe and North America. They have shown effectively that democracy was a continuous process of interconnected struggles for self-determination of individuals, groups and regions. Moments of resurgence and reversals are built into that process. This is mainly because institutions, people's movements and ideas about future or the goals of transformation always challenge one another to establish a new balance.

The Euro-centric, legal institutional notion of democracy which dominated the thinking about democracy from the Glorious Revolution in England till the end of the Second World War and propagated globally by the colonial powers was first challenged by anti-colonial struggles and socialist and communist movements who focused on the substantive dimensions of socio-economic freedom and equality. Without them the claim that democracy gave power to the people as affirmed in the statement that democracy was 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' was hollow.

The dichotomy between procedural democracy and substantive democracy produced many instances of denial of democracy. One-party rule regimes of many kinds, dictatorial, military regimes, claiming to work for economic and social rights of common people, even justified their rule in the name of religion, culture or political ideology. Mass movements on many occasions overthrew established regimes in the name of real democracy or such other values. On the other hand, systems where institutions of democracy appeared to work regularly, there was the phenomenon of racism, patriarchy, class inequality and many such anti-democratic practices that denied equality and freedom to many. While Marxism had provided the original critique of liberal democracy that rested on procedures, anti-colonial struggles and subsequent people's movements enriched this discourse seeking to overcome the dichotomy and emphasising the crucial significance of institutional procedures along with substantive rights at once.



In addition to the above, the explosive development of the Communications and Information Technology (CIT) and the corresponding technological transformation of the entire gamut of social, economic and political management all over the world in the name of globalisation brought in the Silicon Era. One important result of the Silicon era was the discernible centralisation of power on all fronts. With this the movement for democratic transformation which was premised on power at the grass-roots, faced an unprecedented challenge. The view that the CIT presented equal range of opportunities to the people is not borne by facts. The Silicon era had brought into being the silicon capitalism and the Silicon state which are backed by giant capital and both functioned with centralised power. Here we see an irony. Ordinary citizen all over the world who is more conscious of his/her rights and self-worth today than ever before in history, thus making prospects of democracy ever more promising, faces the greatest challenge to that very goal as tools of coercion, response and legitimation had become stronger, sharper and easier for the rulers, in the silicon era. The silicon state and silicon capital have a new ability to enter all realms of human life, thus absorbing the entirety of human activity. The silicon state, the present-day avatar of state, is an absorptive state. The agenda for democracy, the struggle for self-determination has to take note of it.

But the lesson from global history of democracy from Buddha, Confucius and Aristotle till now is that democracy or the struggle for self-determination through liberation from all forms of domination has had a zigzag history. Every revolution has had reversals, every phase of despotism of one or the other kind has produced new moments of struggles. The institutional practices ensuring free elections, peaceful transfer of power, accountability and transparency of governments, independence of judiciary, free press are as important as right to basic human rights, social, economic and cultural that seek freedom from class, race, caste, gender, ethnic, religious and regional and such other domination. Right to struggle for democracy is as important as all the procedures and values put together. That is what the people's movements in ASAFLA have affirmed in the evolving discourse on democracy. Twenty first century is likely to be a short century for democratic revolution.



Whither Indian Democracy?

Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur
Associate Professor,
Centre for Political Studies, JNU

What is the future of democracy in India? There is a good number of scholars who think that Indian democracy has been a success story as we have regular and more or less free elections. There are others who think that it is successful in a very limited sense as we have formal but not substantive democracy and the recent majoritarian turn is a big challenge even for a formal democracy. I would like to explore this question from the perspective of Indian philosophy and explore the possibility of a paradigm shift in the criteria for evaluation of the political system. I intend to argue that the purpose of a political system is to create conditions conducive for species beings' potentials of humans. In other words, the aim of any polity should be to organize the natural resources, knowledge resources, social relations and access to the technology of the self in a way that society becomes non-alienating. Democracy in this sense is a system that gives us free and fair access to all this by breaking the structures of domination which has been created in the process of evolution of the social evolution through power relations. We need to ask if our political system fulfils these criteria for a successful democracy. I would further argue that since the introduction of the neoclassical regime in India, even the success of the formal democracy is at stake. Under this regime, democracy is reduced to elections and election is reduced to management; the political parties are being organized as private corporate companies and there is hardly any inner-party democracy in any sense including that of simple things like free and fair elections of the office bearers; the chief executive of the state now behaves like a corporate chief working on behalf of its collaborators. In this form, democracy is reduced to the legitimizing technique of the capitalist state. Consequences of this kind of transformation of democracy from participatory to cooperate are dangerous for our society. It is producing severe alienation, which is reflected in growing distrust against the government or political class, social conflict including public lynching, caste atrocities and communal violence. Moreover, growing inequality and rising aspirations have brought us to the brink of low-intensity civil war.



Challenges to the Democratic Process in Pakistan

Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee
Research Fellow, ICWA

The year 2017 marked significant political instability in Pakistan. Pakistani society during this period has been challenged by regular sit-ins organised by radical religious groups and parties, weakening the democratic roots. There has been rise of religious and ethnic minorities being persecuted as well as killed. Rise of corruption, family fiefdom, nepotism have been on a steady rise. With the removal of an elected Prime Minister by the courts, bringing in a chosen representative of PML-N to run in the post till the elections, the democratic process has become more complicated. With the increasing political uncertainty in Pakistan's domestic political scenario, the anti-India and the Kashmir card remain to be the main shade, which assists the political leadership from hiding their own shortcomings. Pakistan's relations with US has come at an all-time low, while doubts surfacing with regard to the manner in which China will be influencing Pakistani economy through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor as well as the other investments that China is involved in. The growing rift between the civilian and military leadership in Pakistan might also be a major impediment for the continuance of the democratic process. Pakistani domestic politics is significantly moulded by the relations it maintains with its Eastern and Western Neighbour, India and Afghanistan. The influence of the outside players, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Countries remain to be crucial in the maintenance of domestic political stability. The paper will try to point out the various elements that is challenging the democratic process in Pakistan presently.



Democratic Legitimacy of Judiciaries in South Asia

Dr. Pritam Baruah
Associate Professor of Law
Jindal Global Law School

Judiciaries in South Asia have been both celebrated as protectors of rule of law and democracy, and criticised for undermining democratic decision-making. In this sense they have been allegedly responsible for both resurgences and reversals of democracy. What makes them the subject of such judgment? My presentation will analyse arguments for how judicial decision-making can be read as being democracy-serving and democracy-limiting. In this I will invoke examples from South Asian jurisdictions, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore. I will invoke conceptualisations from constitutional theory to analyse select decisions to argue for the strengths and weaknesses of strategies adopted by judiciaries in South Asian jurisdictions. My argument will be that judicial decisions can be understood to be democratic on deliberative-democratic views of democracy. Such views favour reason-giving views of adjudication as opposed to strategic and managerial views of adjudication. A necessary fall out of such argument is to accept the tension between democracy and constitutionalism and appreciate the value of constitutionalism in non-arbitrary decision-making. The concept of democracy may not have much to contribute to such decision-making unless understood in a deliberative sense. Some of the conclusions I will draw is that South Asia countries require stronger constitutionalism than democracy. Ultimately, both constitutionalism and democracy are in the service of providing for legitimate and accountable government. Countries such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, on varying scales, illustrate the problem of an over emphasis on electoral democracy, whereas countries like Thailand illustrate the perils of an absence of democracy. In contrast China and Singapore stand out as cases that deserve close examination as they claim to be democratic, and meritocratic, but without



Whither Politics?: Adjudicated Democracy in India

Prof. Akhil Ranjan Dutta
Deptt. of Political Science, G.U.

In the post-economic reform era India witnesses significant political developments. First of all, the adoption and intensification of the neo-liberal development model which is based on the premise of the reducing role of the state in public wellbeing. But, ironically, there have also been upheavals of electoral politics which is premised on the philosophy of fulfilment of diverse rights of citizens and communities. There are contradictions between these two processes- one talks of 'less government', the other demands 'maximum government.' Despite state's competitive populism to mitigate the electoral upheavals, the state's core policy orientation has been to dismantle its public wellbeing infrastructure. The contradictions between these two processes have invited huge public wrath pushing the state to indulge in both coercion and politics of diversion and division. Such tactics on the part of the state has made the Indian Judiciary at all level a domain of negotiation between the state and the people. Judiciary is no longer the domain of adjudicating only the legal and constitutional issues, but also a domain of negotiating core social and political issues. In the process, Judiciary has also emerged a domain of adjudicating democracy. There have been number of instances where the adjudication has contributed toward giving more substance to the democratic principles; on the other hand there have also been instances where the adjudication has brought disappointments to mass expectations. Precisely, the process of adjudication has both expanded and also contracted the democratic norms, values and practices in India. The present paper will endeavour to explore these critical issues with a few significant verdicts of Indian Judiciary in the recent past.

Three important domains for understanding the core concerns of adjudication and democracy are



India-ASEAN @ 25: A Review

Dr. Amit Singh ARSD College,
University of Delhi

India and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) are celebrating its 25th anniversary of dialogue relations and to mark this event, the heads of 10 ASEAN nations participated as Chief Guests in the 69th Republic Day parade, which highlighted India's military might and cultural diversity. The presence of 10 ASEAN leaders was unprecedented as for the first time New Delhi has invited so many Heads of State as Chief Guests. This reflects India's growing stature as a major power in the region and perhaps the most momentous exposition of its recently rechristened 'Act-East' (earlier 'Look-East') Policy by the Narendra Modi government.

However, the politico-economic and socio-cultural ties between India and Southeast Asia go back to the pre-Christian era. That era, dominated by the mercantile links also brought Hinduism and Buddhism to the region. The Indian influence is quite visible even in today's Southeast Asia, especially in their language, customs and the rituals of the royalty. Hindu concepts of kingship and Hindu administrative institutions and ceremonies became so deeply embedded in the royal culture of Southeast Asia that even after the Islamisation of some states, these practices remain till date. Nonetheless, India's trade, culture and maritime links with the Southeast Asian kingdoms disrupted with the arrival of the colonial powers in the region. Nevertheless, these traditional linkages have become the key element of India's "Look-East" policy, which initiated in the 1990s. Since then, New Delhi's relationship with the Southeast Asian nations has come a long way. Today, India's economic and trade engagements have added to the close political, economic and security inter-linkages with ASEAN and now with the entire East Asia and the Pacific region.

Hence, the paper aims to review the background of India's 'Act-East' policy. The paper will analyse the role of India's 'Act-East' policy in bridging the gap between India, East Asia and the Pacific countries. The paper will highlight India's political, economic and security interest in Southeast Asia. It will critically examine India's role as a balancing power that the ASEAN nations are seeking.



Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and Challenges for Nepal

Dr. Pramod Jaiswal
Tribhuban University, Nepal

International politics is the realm where great powers constantly seek opportunities to expand their hegemonic role. In this realm, small states on the periphery of great powers face intense pressures, leading to limits on their sovereignty. Nepal, a landlocked country between China and India, is a classic case of a small state striving to preserve its sovereignty. The two Asian powers have been locked in an intense security competition to expand their hegemony in Nepal. Nepal's strategic position and role in ensuring the stability of the region has been heightened in the post 1990s period. An unstable or hostile Nepal can skew geopolitical equations in the region and divert the attentions of the Asian powers away from accelerating their economic growth. Thus, while both India and China need to keep Nepal in their sphere of influence, they can only do it gently, lest the delicate balance of power is not upset. Here lies Nepal's opportunity to play one neighbour against other in order to maintain its sovereignty and ensure its economic progress.

On this pretext, the paper explains the behavior of small states like Nepal in international politics, its relations with China, India factor in Nepal-China relations and opportunities and challenges of the Belt and Road Initiative.

India-ASEAN Relation: Strengthening Cooperation and Partnership

Abhishek Pratap Singh

The relationship between India and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) has constantly moved upwards based on synergy of interests in the last twenty-five years from summit level partners (2002) to that of strategic partnership (2012). In the last quarter century, relation between India and ASEAN has traversed through areas of common strategic concerns and economic interests. Over the years, trade has been one of the principal channels of India's economic integration with ASEAN countries. Beginning from the 'look east policy', in early 1990s to the idea of 'extended neighborhood' and India's recent endeavor for 'act east', ASEAN remains central to India's diplomatic engagement with the Southeast Asia. The relationship provides wider set of institutional framework for greater cooperation in areas like external affairs, defence, connectivity, commerce, telecommunications, agriculture, energy, environmental issues, and tourism.

Given the geo-political developments in the region, both India-ASEAN strives towards stable regional security architecture. To make this relationship strategically credible and coherent wider levels of engagement based on common interests in economic, cultural and security domains needs to be established.

In the given context the proposed paper will seek to understand the key areas of cooperation in India-ASEAN relation also identifying potential areas of broader future engagement.



Democratisation of Space but Denial of Citizenship: Women's Experience in India

Prof. Bidyut Mohanty
Institute of Social Sciences New Delhi.

In the history of women's movement, the Report Towards Equality-1974 created a land mark. The Report highlighted the pathetic condition of Indian women in all respects –economic, political and social. This situation persisted even though women participated in the freedom struggle along with men.

The government took various progressive measures to improve the status of women. The Seventy-Third Constitution Amendment, 1992; right to livelihood and various laws to protect the women from various discriminations were passed. The objective of such laws has been to give women space in public and economic spheres so that they get recognition in social sphere and acquire some material support. The 73rd and 74th Amendments for example, provided for reservation for not less than one-third (now fifty percent) women both at the membership and headship level. This in turn resulted in over one million elected women leaders in panchayats and urban local bodies in each term. Over 25 years the law has enabled to prepare the ground for creating eight million women leaders if we assume that for one woman to win at least two more women would be contesting on an average.

Similarly, as a result of National Rural/Urban Livelihood Mission, 86 lakh women Self Help Groups have been active in 2016-17.

One of the most important achievements of the above Acts has been formation of women's collective consisting of both SHG members and panchayat leaders. They in turn take up various issues like drinking water, widow pension, monitoring of PDS etc. At the social level they are also active in campaigns for preventing use of liquor by their husbands and sons.

However, beyond these measures- howsoever significant they are- women's dignity as citizen has not been achieved much progress yet, though some ground has been laid. Otherwise female foetus would not have been aborted systematically nor girls are being raped or dying due to heavy dowry. Still one should not lose hope because there are encouraging trends such as demand for political recognition by the North-East women, determined attempt for women's entry into Shani temple in Ahmednagar, and Dargah in Mumbai, demand for banning triple- talaq etc. There is a long struggle ahead. But they indicate gathering momentum for more forceful demand for fulsome citizenship by women themselves in future.



Democracy and Development: Why Processes are Critical

Dr. Joydeep Baruah
Associate Professor
OKD Institute of Social Change
and Development, Guwahati

One of the foundational requirements of democracy is the individual freedom, and the capability approach considers development as enhancement of individual freedom. The two ideas i.e. democracy and development, thus, connected through the notion of 'freedom'. The notion of 'freedom' embodied in capability, however, has two connotations - (i) freedom from within i.e. individuals are to be freed from internal limitations due to basic deprivations in terms of ill health, ignorance and poverty to exercise choices over given opportunities, and (ii) freedom from limitations imposed by external conditions in exercising their choices. The first i.e. the 'opportunity aspect' of freedom relates to the level of achievement, while the second relates to the 'process aspect' of freedom i.e. how the realised level of wellbeing is actually achieved. Therefore, the normative framework of evaluation must examine, not only the achievements, but it should also carefully assess the processes by which the achievements have been realised. In the capability approach, the first type of achievement – achievement without taking note of the processes involved is usually called 'culmination outcome'. The other type – achievements considered along with processes involved is formally called 'comprehensive outcome'. The relation between these two aspects of freedom is of fundamental significance in capability approach. In this paper the idea of subjective wellbeing is proposed to denote the valuation of processes. It is subjective because it takes note of qualitative aspects of various processes involved including governance and service delivery which signifies the functional aspects of democracy. It has been argued that in evaluation of development, both 'achievements' as well as the 'processes of achievements' are to be considered together because processes are invariably linked to some very important aspects of development such as inequality.



Gender, Citizenship and Limits of Democracy: Strengthening Political Representation of Women in India

Dr. Upasana Mahanta
O.P. Jindal Global University

The terms 'citizenship' and 'democracy' are deeply contested concepts in feminist political theory. Although historically framed as a gender neutral concept that confers universalistic rights of social and political participation, citizenship and political action in modern democracies are often shaped through one's location within social structures based on class, caste, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, region, language, and /or sexuality. Historically, the genesis of the concept of citizenship can be traced back to the traditions of early liberalism and civic republicanism that stressed on individualism and a competitive economic self. However, this individualism operated in the context of a public/private dichotomy, which considered women's role to be restricted to the domestic sphere. The traditional conceptions of citizenship are, therefore, deeply entrenched in a masculine bias that limit women's full enjoyment of citizenship rights.

Bringing forth the question "Is citizenship gendered", Sylvia Walby in her essay (1994) argued, "not only should we ask how gendered is citizenship, but also the symmetrical question: how important is citizenship for gender?" In the political sphere, this has been articulated through an emphasis on women's full and equal participation in formal politics. Without political agency, women would not be able to secure civil, political or social rights. Moreover, the exclusion of women from the political sphere leads to a marginalization of women's concerns from public discourses. However, the perception of politics as 'high politics' removed from the realities of people's daily lives has been one of the chief impediment to women's realization of political citizenship rights. Feminists engagements with citizenship, therefore, seeks to reconceptualise the relationship between social citizenship, political participation and power.

Within this conceptual framework, this paper seeks to address the question of political representation of women in Indian democracy that is rooted in a complex range of socio-political realities. According to the Women in Politics 2017 Map recently launched by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women, India is at 148th position in representation of women in executive government. Women make up 11.8 percent of the Lok Sabha (Lower House) in India (64 women elected to the 542-member house) and 11 percent of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) (27 of the 245 members). The paper will focus on the critical challenges that women face in claiming full political citizenship and identify the best practices for surmounting the entrenched obstacles to women's advancement in the political sphere. The paper aims to engage with chief contestation arising from the question whether the demand for women's political participation and representation be conceptualized in terms of 'equal' or 'different', as in women as equal with men or as different from men and possessive of unique qualities. The approach of the paper is two-pronged: one, to explore the issue of women's descriptive representation focusing on women's presence in national and subnational political decision making; and two, to examine the challenges and solutions for women's substantive representation.



**Tribal Politics and the Dilemma in India: Returns to the Past or
Re-Imaginations of the Future**

Dr. Jagannath Ambagudia
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Guwahati Campus

Societies marked by differences often adopt group representation in politics. Group representation focuses on the changing relationship between communities and political representation within the broader liberal democratic framework. The tribal communities in India were introduced as 'a distinct category' to the political system due to their historical injustices and exclusion from formal political institutions. The post-colonial Indian state enacted institutionalised mechanism in the form of 'electoral reservation' to ensure their representation in the democratic politics. The provision of electoral reservation aimed to address discrimination emerging out of their exclusion from formal political institutions and to accommodate differences in the political sphere.

The tribal communities amidst perplexities are in a political dilemma in the contemporary period. There is a continuous interface between tribal practices of politics and the demands of modern democracy. The incompatible experiences of tribals with modern democracy have led to the emergence of a dilemma, 'whether to return to the past' and follow their own method of politics and governance or reimagine their future in consonance with requirements and consistencies of modern democratic practices. Within this backdrop, the paper looks at the engagement of tribals in mainstream democratic politics. The paper begins with locating the tribals in the political system during the colonial period. It proceeds to focus on criteria and modus operandi for reserving a constituency in the post-colonial period and the constitutional provisions by narrowing down to a political reservation. The paper explores the changing relationship between the tribals and political parties by taking into consideration the performances of political parties in reserved constituencies and their implications to a larger political scenario. It examines the relationship between tribal political representatives and policy outcomes within the redistributive framework. Sixthly, it focuses on emerging issues and concerns of tribal politics, and followed by conclusion, providing direction to future research on tribal politics.



Religious Authority, Electoral Politics and Secular Democracy: Extending Perspectives from Tawang

Dr. Swargajyoti Gohain
Department of Sociology and
Anthropology, Ashoka University

This paper extends the arguments made in an earlier paper (Gohain 2017) written about the participation of Buddhist monks in electoral politics of Arunachal Pradesh. It explores the role of high-ranking religious personnel - persons who control important religious offices - in the electoral politics of a secular democracy like India. It seeks to analyse the possibilities as well as possible pitfalls of such a process. While the influence commanded by the ownership of religious authority may be usefully leveraged to mobilise public opinion and support for common causes, it may also create polarisation between majority and minority populations, especially in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious fabric of Indian society.

In Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, where the majority are Tibetan Buddhists, not only have lay electoral candidates relied on the leadership and guidance of monks to gain success in state elections, but also monks have successfully contested elections to assume political leadership in local society. This is also true of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. Across India, the phenomenon of religious leaders winning electoral mandate is increasingly visible. Given this context, what are the challenges that may arise? The very use of religion as a platform may diminish the ideas of equality and liberty so essential to secular democracy. Can a political leader who is also a religious leader maintain an effective balance between his/her religious interests and his/her commitment to the ideals of secular democracy? This paper argues that religious authority, harnessed profitably, may be beneficial as long as it upholds the tenets of a secular state, which includes the protection of minorities.



Indian and Chinese Diaspora in Malaysia: A Comparative Perspective

Promod Singh
Ph.D. Scholar
Jawaharlal Nehru University

The term 'diaspora' was used for the first time when the Jewish people were exiled from their homeland, Palestine in the 6th century BC, and they scattered in different countries. In the contemporary international system, the diasporas are seen as people or community or section of them, leaving their native country and settling abroad in other countries, with or without thought of coming back to their homeland.

The history of Indian and Chinese emigration to the Southeast Asian region is an old one. The first phase of Indian emigration went to the region as merchants and traders. While the 18th century witnessed the largest Indian migration to the region, when the colonial British rulers took them as indentured labourers and under Kangani system to work in the rubber plantations in Malaya. Another phase was in the 19th century, when Indians went as clerk, traders, bureaucrats to the region. Latest round is the Indian IT professional moving to the region for better economic prospects.

On the other hand, the Chinese traders had established trading relations with the region long ago. However, the story of Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia began only in the 19th and 20th century British colonial rule. At this time, the British colonial economy was characterised by the rapid expansion of tin industry and later, rubber plantations in the Straits Settlements of Singapore and Penang. The industry required adequate labour; while on the other hand, poverty and debt had gripped the Southern parts of Chinese territory. Poor Chinese started migrating in large numbers to the region in search of employment and better life avenues; thinking they would eventually return back to their own land.

The Malaysian society has a population of 32 million approximately, comprising of three major ethnic communities: Malays (68.8%), Chinese (23%) and Indians (7%). The word Bumiputera means 'the sons of the soil'. In Malaysian context, the Malays and other indigenous people are collectively known as Bumiputera. Article 153 of the Constitution of Malaysia provides special position to the Malays and the 'natives' of Sabah and Sarawak. It also empowers the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (Head of the State of Malaysia) to make reservations for these people in the public service, educational institutions, scholarships, and business permits or licenses. The post-1969 racial riots period witnessed an increasing tendency towards Malay assertiveness and dominance. In 1971, the Constitution was amendment to establish the absolute power of the Conference of Rulers in maintaining the privileges of the Malays, in that any change to the privileges accorded to Malays and the people of Sabah and Sarawak now required the consent of the Conference of Rulers as well as the required two-third's parliamentary majority.

Today, a major chunk of the Indian population in Malaysia is poor, while most ethnic Chinese are prosperous. However, at the socio-economic level, both the Indian and Chinese community feel being discriminated and that they are not being accorded equal citizenship rights alongside the Malays, while there is revival of Islam in the country. This feeling of marginalisation and vulnerability in non-Malays has affected the process of national unity and integration.

The author seeks to argue that accommodating the concerns of citizenship and discrimination of Indian and Chinese diaspora is crucial role in achieving the Malaysia's vision of national unity and integration and in fulfilling its dream of becoming a developed nation.

*International Seminar on
Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia*



PROGRAMME

DAY I: 8th MARCH, 2018

9:30 AM to 10:00 AM
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

REGISTRATION & WELCOME TEA
INAUGURAL SESSION
University Anthem

Welcome Note
Prof. Akhil Ranjan Dutta
Coordinator: UGC-SAP (DRS II) & International Seminar

Why do we want to Reach Out South and South East Asia?
Prof. Nani Gopal Mahanta
Head and Professor, Department of Political Science
Director i/c, Centre for South East Asian Studies, Gauhati University

Speeches of the Panel Speakers

Prof. Udayon Misra
(Retd.) Dibrugarh University

Prof. Swaran Singh
Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Inauguration of the Seminar
Dr. Mridul Hazarika
Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University

Vote of Thanks
Dr. Dhruba Pratim Sharma
Deputy Coordinator, UGC-SAP (DRS II)
Department of Political Science, GU

Session Co-ordinator
Ms. Barasa Deka,
Assistant Professor, Deptt. of Political Science, G.U.

11.30 AM to 11.45 AM

TEA

11:45 AM to 1:15 PM

SPECIAL SESSION: CHINA, SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA
Chair: Prof. Swaran Singh, CIPOD, JNU

Speakers
Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, (Retd.) University of Delhi
China's Global Vision: Implications for South & South East Asia

Ambassador (Prof.) Phuncok Stobdan, IDSA
China's Buddhist (Soft) Diplomacy in South and South East Asia
Interactions
Remarks from the Chair
Vote of Thanks
Session Coordinator:
Prof. Jayanta Krishna Sarmah,
Department of Political Science, G.U

*International Seminar on
Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia*



PROGRAMME

DAY I: 8th MARCH, 2018

1.15 PM to 2.00 PM

LUNCH

2.00 PM to 3.30 PM

TECHNICAL SESSION-I

South Asia and South East Asia: Country Perspectives

Chair: Ambassador (Prof.) Phunchok Stobdan

Mr. Subir Bhaumik, Eminent Journalist and Author

The shadow of ethnic conflict on Myanmar's Democracy

Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Whither Indian Democracy?

Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee, ICWA, New Delhi
Challenges to the Democratic Process in Pakistan

3:30 PM to 3:45 PM

TEA

3:45 PM to 5:15 PM

TECHNICAL SESSION-II

Judiciary and Democracy

Chair: Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur

Advocate Niloy Dutta

Democratic Values of Indian Constitution and Indian Judiciary

Dr. Pritam Baruah, Jindal Global Law School

Democratic legitimacy of judiciaries in South Asia

Prof. Akhil Ranjan Dutta, Department of Political Science, GU
Wither Politics?: Adjudicated Democracy in India

DAY II: 9th MARCH, 2018

9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

TECHNICAL SESSION-III

INDIA-ASEAN and OBOR

Chair: Subir Bhaumik

Dr. Amit Singh, ARSD College, University of Delhi
India-ASEAN @ 25: A Review

Dr. Pramod Jaiswal, Tribhuban University, Kathmandu (Nepal)
Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and Challenges for Nepal

Abhishek Pratap Singh, University of Delhi
India-ASEAN Relation: Strengthening Cooperation and Partnership

11:00 AM to 11:15 AM

TEA

11:15 AM to 1:00 PM

TECHNICAL SESSION-IV

Development, Democracy and Gender

Chair: Prof. Nandana Dutta, Department of English,
Gauhati University

Prof. Bidyut Mohanty,
Democratisation of Space but Denial of Citizenship: Women's
Experience in India

*International Seminar on
Resurgence and Reversals of Democracy in South and South East Asia*



PROGRAMME

DAY II: 9th MARCH, 2018

11:15 AM to 1:00 PM

Dr. Joydeep Baruah, OKDISC
Democracy and Development: Why Processes are Critical

Dr. Upasana Mahanta, Jindal Global Law School
Gender, Citizenship and Limits of Democracy: Strengthening
Political Representation of Women in India

1:00 PM to 1:45 PM

LUNCH

1:45 PM to 3:15 PM

TECHNICAL SESSION-V
Primordial Identity and Democracy
Chair: Prof. Bidyut Mohanty

Dr. Jagannath Ambagudia, TISS, Guwahati Campus
Tribal Politics and the Dilemma in India: Returns to the Past or
Re-Imaginations of the Future

Dr. Swargajyoti Gohain, Ashoka University
Religious Authority, Electoral Politics and Secular Democracy:
Extending Perspectives from Tawang

Promod Singh, Ph.D. Scholar, JNU
Indian and Chinese Diaspora in Malaysia: A Comparative
Perspective

3:15 PM to 3:30 PM

TEA

3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

VALEDICTORY SESSION
Chair
Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty

Valedictory Address
Prof. S. D. Muni
(Retd.) Jawaharlal Nehru University and IDSA, New Delhi

Vote of Thanks:
Monoj Das,
Coordinator, Centre for South East Asian Studies, G.U.